

Elizabeth Harriet Douglass
The gift of her Father
September 20
1811

THE
I. ENGLAND, HEROCAL EPISTLES.
BY MICHAEL DRAYTON.
VILLAGE CURATE.
NOTES, AND ILLUSTRATIONS.
H. ADRIANO, of the F.R. of June. A Form.
Price Two Shillings.



Just Published,

In small Octavo, Price Four Shillings sewed,

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By **MICHAEL DRAYTON.**

NOTES and ILLUSTRATIONS.

II. ADRIANO; or, the First of June. A Poem,

with
Price Two Shillings sewed.

(P)

THE
VILLAGE CURATE,

A

P O E M.

*Dum relego scripſiſſe pudeſt, quia plurima cerno,
Me quoque qui feci iudice, digna lini.*

The SECOND EDITION corrected.



L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, N^o 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

MDCXC.

THE

VILLAGE CURATE

P O E M



L O N D O N

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, No. 7, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

M DCCC

VILLAGE CURATE.

OF Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden—of the glorious year,
In all her changes fair; of gentle Spring,
Veil'd in a show'r of roses and perfumes,
Refulgent Summer in the pride of youth,
Mild Autumn with her wain and wheaten sheaf,
Or fullen Winter, loud, and tyrannous,
Let nobler poets sing. Sit thou apart,
And on thine own Parnassus sweep the lyre,
Applauded Hayley, by the Muses taught
That in those fairy groves delight to dwell

B

Thy

Thy hand has rear'd. And thou, surpassing bard,
 That pris'ner to some fair one's will hast fung
 Thy Task so sweetly, strike again the strong,
 The bold, the various energetic chord,
 Secure and happy in thy far retreat.
 Be mine the task to sing the man how blest,
 The Village Curate. From no foreign shore
 Came he a wand'ring fugitive, and tost
 On angry seas, to please a poet's gods,
 At length scarce reach'd the hospitable port,
 With Father Brute he boasts not to have left
 The tottering state of Priam, nor his blood
 Can shew by lineal catalogue so pure
 And only British, that no rude invader
 Of Danish, Saxon, or of Norman breed,
 Has mix'd with his god-sprung progenitors:
 He has not climb'd the high and hoary tops
 Of Snowdon or Penllyn, yet in heart
 A truer Briton lives not; thee he loves,
 O happy England, and will love thee still.

In



THE VILLAGE CURATE.

In yonder mansion, rear'd by rustick hands,
And deck'd with no superfluous ornament,
Where use was all the architect propos'd,
And all the master wish'd, that scarce a mile
From village tumult, to the morning sun
Turns his warm aspect, yet with blossoms hung
Of cherry, and of peach, lives happy still
The reverend Alcanor. On a hill,
Half way between the summit and a brook
That idly wanders at the foot, it stands,
And looks into a valley wood-besprent,
That winds along below. Beyond the brook,
Where the high coppice intercepts it not,
Or social elms, or with his ample waist
The venerable oak, up the steep side
Of yon aspiring hill full opposite,
Luxuriant pasture spreads before his eye
Eternal verdure; save that here and there
A spot of deeper green shews where the swain
Expects a nobler harvest, or high poles

THE VILLAGE CURATE

Mark the retreat of the scarce-budded hop,
To be hereafter eminently fair,
And hide the naked staff that train'd him up
With golden flow'rs. On the hill-top behold
The village steeple, rising from the midst
Of many a rustick edifice; 'tis all
The pastor's care. For he, ye whipping clerks,
Who with a jockey's speed from morn till night
Gallop amain through sermons, services,
And dirty roads, and hardly find the day
Sufficient for your toil—he still disdains
For lucre-sake to do his work amiss,
And starve the flock he undertakes to feed.

Nor does he envy your ignoble ease,
Ye pamper'd Priests, that only eat and sleep,
And sleep and eat, and quaff the tawny juice
Of vet'ran port: sleep on, and take your rest,
Nor quit the downy couch preferment strews
To aid your master. While Alcanor lives,

Though

Though Providence no greater meed design
To crown his labour, than the scanty sum
One cure affords, yet will he not regret
That he renounc'd a life so profitless
To God and to his country. For he too
Might still have slumber'd in an easy chair,
Or idly loll'd upon a sofa, held
A willing captive in the magic chain
Of Alma-mater, but in happy time
Serious occasion cut the golden link,
And set him free, to taste the nobler sweets
Of life domestic. There th' apostate lives,
In habitation neat, but plain and small.
Look in and see, for there no treason lurks,
And he who lives as in the face of Heav'n
Shuns not the eye of man. On either side
The door that opens with a touch, a room,
The kitchen one, and what you will the other.
There now he sits in meditation lost,
And to the growing page commits with speed

To-morrow's text. Look round, nor fear to rouse
The busy soul, that on her work intent,
Holds sense a pris'ner, and with cautious bolt
Has barr'd full-fast the portals of the mind,
To shut out interruption. Bare the walls—
For here no painter's happy art has taught
The great progenitor to live anew
Upon the smiling canvass. Sculpture here
No ornament has hung of fruit or flow'r,
Nor specimen is here, to shew how well
The imitative style can steal the grace
That Nature lent the Painter. One poor sheet,
Half almanack, half print, without a frame,
Above the grate hangs unaccompanied :
A kind remembrancer of time to come,
Of fast and festival, expiring terms,
New moon and full. A regal table here
Arrests the eye, and here the vast account
Of Chancellor, High Steward, and their train,
Vice-chancellor, and Proctors, awful sound,

And

And still more awful sight to him that treads
The public street with hat and stick, or wants
That grave appendage of the chin, a band.
Above behold the venerable pile
Some pious Founder rais'd ; but stay we not
To call him from his grave, where he perhaps
Would gladly rest unknown, and have an ear
Not to be rous'd by the Archangel's trump.

Yon half-a-dozen shelves support, vast weight!
The Curate's Library. There marshall'd stand,
Sages and heroes, modern and antique:
He their commander, like the vanquish'd fiend,
Out-cast of Heav'n, oft thro' their armed files
Darts an experienc'd eye, and feels his heart
Distend with pride to be their only chief.
Yet needs he not the tedious muster-roll,
The title-page of each well-known, his name,
And character. Nor scorns he to converse

With raw recruit or musty veteran,
And oft prefers the mutilated garb
To macaroni suit, bedaub'd with gold,
That often hides the man of little worth,
And tinsel properties. What need of dress
So fine and gorgeous, if the soul within
Be chaste and pure? The fairest mask put on
Hides not the wrinkle of deformity.

A soul of worth will gild a beggar's frieze,
And on his tatter'd suit a lustre shed
No time can change. Give to the harlot's cheek
The glowing rouge, true virtue needs it not.
Shed perfumes in the chambers of the sick,
The lip of health has odours of its own.

Now mark we, what the master most esteems,
Yon antiquated thing, whose shapeless bulk
Fills half his room, the name a harpsichord.
In days remote the artist liv'd, whose hand

First

First smooth'd the burnish'd surface, haply sprung
From line of Jubal, whose ingenious race
First taught the harp and organ. Thence it came,
Like great Atrides' sceptre, handed down
From Vulcan's smithy: to his chatterbox,
The pert and nimble-finger'd Argicide
Jove gave it, he to Pelops, and so on.
So when his Grace a thread-bare coat discards,
He gives it to his valet, he to Tom,
And Tom to Dick; then fwings it for a while
Under a penthouse-shade in Monmouth-street.
It travels once again from back to back,
Of prentice, poet, pedlar, till at length,
Quite out at elbows, and of buttons stript,
Powder'd and greasy, to some beggar's brat
It falls, a golden prize. Such the descent
Alcanor's instrument may boast, but he
More for its present use the thing esteems,
Than could its ancient pedigree be trac'd
E'en to the days of old Cadwallader.

What

What boots it, O ye titled great, to shew
The noble ancestor of regal line,
Whose valour bound an enemy in chains,
Or patriotic wisdom sav'd a state;
To be allied to men of wit and worth,
The glory of the world, if in yourselves
No spark of virtue live? Who can esteem
The man that all his dignity derives
From honors not his own? Give me the steed
Whose noble efforts bore the prize away,
I care not for his grandfire or his dam;
Be thine the nag of admirable port,
That spare and sinewless still lags behind,
I ask him not, though sprung of Galathy,
Bucephalus, or Pegase. Yet I grant,
Where goodness is to greatness near allied,
And blood and virtue for one empire strive,
The man that has them is a man indeed.
Nor, trust me, is the world so worthless grown,
But such there are, and such my soul esteems.

That

That ample case, that underneath the frame
Of harpsichord so smooth, in shape uncouth
Reposes, from the morning broom defends
A viol-bass, else long ago destroy'd
By the rude blows of flattern Dorothy.
For she, a subtle wit, can plainly see
No worth in that whose worth is far remov'd
Beyond her sight, and reach : so, critic-like,
She sweeps away her cobweb with a frisk,
And crushes many a pearl. That smaller case
A violin protects, still safe and sound,
Though tumbled oft upon the parlour floor
With proud disdain, and ruin musical.
Six ashens chairs, a table, and a grate,
Poker and tongs, make up the vast account,

Such is Alcanor's household, such his state,
Save what might yet be sung in higher strains,
Of pan and kettle, barrel, broom, and stool,
The furniture of wash-house, kitchen vast,

And

And cellar ill-bestow'd; imperial themes,
 And worthy meditation infinite.
 Save too the tedious invent'ry above,
 Of bed and blanket, old bureau, and chair,
 Besides what ornaments the skyey nest
 Of high-aspiring Dorothy. A maid
 Is she, that sleeps in the moon's neighbourhood,
 And often hears the golden show'r descend
 Upon the tiles above, nor dreads assault
 From maid-deceiving Jove. Too wise were he
 To seek Calisto under Dian's nose.
 Let the fair silver-shafted Queen depart,
 And Jove may come to woo her in the dark;
 She too has beauty that demands a veil,
 O hide her from him or she wins him not,

Reader, methinks displeasure clouds thy brow,
 And Scorn prepares her poison'd arrows, perch'd
 On that protruded lip. Is this the man,
 The Poet sings, that stranger to the world

‘ Suffers

‘ Suffers the speedy wick of life to burn
‘ E’en to the socket, and the duty done
‘ One church affords, the rest of life gives up
‘ To selfish ease? Are these the nobler sweets
‘ Of life domestic? Was it but for this
‘ Alcanor fled the publick walks of life,
‘ And blest the serious cause that set him free
‘ From Alma-mater’s chain? Nobler it were
‘ To mingle with the busy world, and be
‘ As others are, than sit at home supine
‘ And sedulous to please himself alone.
‘ I grant him innocent and free from blame,
‘ Yet curse the bliss that centres in itself.
‘ Give me the man who cannot taste a joy
‘ That none partakes.’—A truce, my gentle friend,
For such Alcanor is. Not for himself
He sought the lonely cell remote, and stor’d
His humble mansion with resources sweet
Of intellectual bliss. To other eyes
And other ears the letter’d page unfolds

Ambrosial

Ambrosial food, the honey of research,
'Tis not to please Alcanor's self alone,
Or frantic Dorothy, so oft is heard
The melting sound of sweet-ton'd harmony.
In chambers yet unsung three Fairies dwell,
Each to Alcanor bound, and near in blood,
But nearer in affection. Julia she,
Who holds the rein of household management,
And moderates with skill the lavish hand
Of hasty Dorothy. Eliza next,
Of aspect mild and ever-blooming cheek;
Good humour there, and innocence, and health
Perennial roses shed. It is a May
That never quits her blush, but still the same
Is seen in Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring;
Save when it glows with a superior red,
Kiss'd by the morning breeze, or lighted up
At sound of commendation well-bestow'd
Under the down-cast eye of modest worth,
That shrinks at its own praise. Ye thoughtless belles,
That

That day by day the fashionable round
Of dissipation tread, stealing from art
The blush Eliza owns, to hide a cheek
Pale and deserted, come, and learn of me
How to be ever blooming, young, and fair.
Give to the mind improvement. Let the tongue
Be subject to the heart and head. Withdraw
From city smoke, and trip with agile foot,
Oft as the day begins, the steepy down
Or velvet lawn, earning the bread you eat.
Rise with the lark, and with the lark to bed.
The breath of night's destructive to the hue
Of ev'ry flow'r that blows. Go to the field,
And ask the humble daisy why it sleeps
Soon as the sun departs? Why close the eyes
Of blossoms infinite, ere the still moon
Her oriental veil put off? Think why,
Nor let the sweetest blossom be expos'd
That nature boasts, to night's unkindly damp.
Well may it droop, and all its freshness lose,

Compell'd

Compell'd to taste the rank and pois'nous steam
Of midnight theatre, and morning ball.
Give to repose the solemn hour she claims,
And from the forehead of the morning steal
The sweet occasion. O there is a charm
The morning has, that gives the brow of age
A smack of youth, and makes the lip of youth
Shed perfumes exquisite. Expect it not,
Ye who till noon upon a down-bed lie,
Indulging sev'rous sleep, or wakeful dream
Of happiness no mortal heart has felt.
But in the regions of romance. Ye fair,
Like you it must be woo'd, or never won.
And being lost, it is in vain ye ask
For milk of roses and Olympian dew.
Cosmetic art no tincture can afford
The faded feature to restore: No chain,
Be it of gold, and strong as adamant,
Can fetter beauty to the fair one's will.

But

But leave me not the gentle Isabel
Unfung, though nature on her cheek no rose
Has planted, and the lily blossom there
Without a rival—Look within, and learn
That nature often on the mind bestows
What she denies the face.—O, she is kind,
And gives to ev'ry man his proper gift,
To make him needful in the land he lives.
There is not inequality so strange
'Twixt man and man, as haughty wits suppose.
The beggar treads upon the monarch's heel
For excellence, and often wears a heart
Of noble temper, under filth and rags :
While he that reigns, in spite of outward pomp,
Is mean and beggarly within, and far outweigh'd
By the offensive lazar at his gate.
Th' unletter'd fool that daily steers the plough,
With vacant head, and heart as unimprov'd
As the dull brute he drives, gives to the world
A necessary good, which all thy pains,

Ingenious Critic, or thy deep research,
Profound Philosopher, thy preachings, Clerk,
Thy prattle, Lawyer, or thy grave demurs,
Costly Physician, hardly shall exceed.
The kingly tulip captivates the eye,
But smelt we loath, while the sweet violet,
That little beauty boasts, hid from the sight,
With such a fragrant perfume hits the sense
As makes us love ere we behold. And so
The gaudy peacock of the feather'd race
The noblest seems, till the sweet note be heard
That nightly cheers the musing poet's ear
Under the thorny brake; and then we grant,
That little Philomel, so unadorn'd,
Needs not the aid of plumes. So, Isabel,
Internal worth upon thy cheek bestows
A rose's beauty, tho' no rose be there.
A heart that almost breaks to be rebuk'd,
A mind inform'd, yet fearful to be seen,
Kept by a tongue that never but at home,

And

And cautious then, its golden trust betrays—
These are thy charms, and they are charms for me,
And in my eye as sweet a grace bestow,
As matchless beauty, trick'd in airy smiles
And suit of fantasy, what time she trips
With foot inaudible the sprightly round
Of fairy dance, outshining ev'ry star
And planet of the night. And these shall last,
As morning fair and fresh as amaranth,
When all thy triumphs, Beauty, are no more.

Here let us pause. For learned jockeys say,
'Tis good to give one's steed a morning draught.
And he that will may whet his whistle too
With dram of gin or cordial peppermint,
The journey scarce begun. Tedious the way,
Thro' many a dismal lane, and darksome wood,
In story famous for the murder done
On nightly traveller. And ask the sot
Who daily drives the clattering stage, with face

Red as a butcher's beef, and coat of proof,
Lashing his rawbon'd steeds to be in time,
Now swearing, drinking now, now cutting jokes,
Now laughing loud, and now with furly heel
Stamping the boot—ask him, I say, if drink
Be not the foul of labour. What could he,
The frequent pot denied, the smiling bowl,
And ever and again returning dram?
Or ask the drunken fool, that all day long
Or drinks, or lolls upon an alehouse bench,
With pot in hand, and thirsty pipe in mouth.
Sons of Anacreon, say whence the laugh
That shakes the very roof, at ev'ry pause
Of the loud song with Stentrophonic voice
Bray'd forth? Or you, ye gallant bucks and bloods,
Say whence your noble exploits, to beset
Fair Thais, kick the waiter, break the lamps,
Cry fire, and bid defiance to the watch?
Join your shrill pipes, ye maids of Billingsgate,
And market dames, and make the chorus full.

‘ O, there

' O, there is nothing noble to be done
 ' 'Till we have swallow'd pint on pint. 'Tis drink,
 ' And only drink, that makes the world go round.'

I praise you not; and if there be a man
 Who thus far has perus'd my careless page,
 In hopes to find a palliative to vice,
 Here let us part.—An enemy to mirth
 Who deems me, does me wrong. I hold it good
 To laugh away a portion of my days,
 And give to mirth her song, to sport her feather.
 But he that draws his wit to stab at truth,
 And is the friend of folly when he smiles,
 Has liv'd too long. O let me never be
 Virtue's affassin, or the shield of vice.
 Kind Heaven, if there be an hour so black
 Yet lodg'd in future time; O cut me off
 Ere it arrive, and send me to my grave
 E'en in the pride and glory of my strength.

YE gentle Pow'rs (if any such there be,
 And if there be not, 'tis a sweet mistake
 To think there be) that day by day, unseen,
 Where souls unanimous, and link'd in love,
 In sober converse spend the vacant hour,
 Hover above, and in the cup of life
 A cordial pour that all its bitter drowns,
 And gives the hasty minutes as they pass
 Unwonted fragrance; come and aid my song.
 In that clear fountain of eternal love
 That flows for ay at the right hand of him,
 The great Incomprehensible ye serve,
 Dip my advent'rous pen, that nothing vile,
 Of the chaste eye or ear unworthy, may
 In this my early song be seen or heard.

Proceed

Proceed we then to mark the Curate's steps,
His mode of living, manners, and pursuits,
As down the steep declivity of life
He glides, and hastens to the hungry grave.
One year the limits of our song confine,
From early spring till spring return again.

Then let the muse begin, when Winter yet
Powders the lawn with snow, and on our eaves
Hangs the chaste icicle. Be that the time,
When the tir'd sportsman lays his gun aside,
Nor wages ineffectual war again
On partridge race. The day St. Valentine,
When maids are brisk, and at the break of day
Start up, and turn their pillows, all agog
To know what happy swain the fates provide
A mate for life. Then follows vast discharge
Of true-love knots and sonnets nicely penn'd,
But to the learned critic's eye no verse,
But prose distracted, galloping away

Like yelping cur with kettle at his tail.
Forgive the thought, ye maids of poesy,
And be as kind as fair. A man may laugh
And yet approve, and I your pains applaud,
Tho' short of excellence. I love the maid
That has ambition, and betrays a mind
Of active and ingenious turn; that scorns
Only to be what Fashion and the age
Require, and can do more than flirt her fan,
Read novels, dance with grace, sing playhouse airs,
Talk scandal, daub or vellum on her face,
Retain some half-a-dozen terms in French,
And half as many English, and dispatch
By ev'ry post a tedious manuscript,
Which to translate would crack the very brain
Of Arabic Professor. O ye fair,
Ye were design'd for nobler flights than these.
Nature on you as well as us bestow'd
The good capacity. And though to us
She gave the nicer judgment, yet she hid

The sweet defect in you, with better skill
To clothe the fair idea, keener eye,
And quicker apprehension. 'Tis in you
Imagination glows in all her strength,
Gay as the robe of spring, and we delight
To see you pluck her blossoms, and compose
The cheerful nosegay for the swain you love.
What if Alcanor's self should not disdain
To imitate your heart, but sometimes hang
Ill-woven chaplets on Maria's brow,
That needs no ornament to set it off
With better grace. The hour so spent shall live,
Not unapplauded, in the book of heav'n.
For dear and precious as the moments are,
Permitted man, they are not all for deeds
Of active virtue. Give we none to vice,
And Heav'n will not strict reparation ask
For many a summer's day and winter's eve
So spent as best amuses us. Alas !
If he that made us were extreme to mark

The

The trifled hour, what human soul could live?
We trifle all, and he that best deserves
Is but a trifler. What art thou whose eye
Follows my pen, or what am I that write
Both triflers. 'Tis a trifling world, from him
That banquets daintily in sleeves of lawn,
To him that starves upon a country cure:
From him that is the pilot of a state,
To him that begs, and rather begs than works.

Then blame we not Alcanor for his pains,
Nor think him misemploy'd, what time he sits
Eager to clothe the new-born thought, and woos
The maiden Meditation, hard to win,
For terms of apt significance. Nor then,
When winter better pleas'd puts on a smile,
And round his garden at high noon he walks,
Not unattended, and the daffodil
And early snowdrop welcomes, pensive flow'rs.
Nor needs he then excuse, what time he starts,

To

To mark the progress of the morning sun,
As northward from his equinox he steers
And once again brings on the glorious year.
Sweet are the graces that the steps attend
Of early morning, when, the clouded brow
Of winter smooth'd, up from her orient couch
She springs, and like a maid betroth'd, puts on
Her bridal suit, and with an ardent smile
Comes forth to greet her swain. And to my eye,
As well as thine, Alcanor, grateful 'tis,
Ay, passing sweet, to mark the cautious pace
Of slow-returning Spring, e'en from the time
When first the matted apricot unfolds
His tender bloom, till the full orchard glows;
From when the gooseberry first shews a leaf,
Till the high wood is clad, and the broad oak
Gives to the fly-stung ox a shade at noon
Sun proof. How charming 'tis, to see sweet May
Laugh in the rear of winter, and put on
Her gay apparel to begin anew

The

The wanton year. See were she comes again
As fair, as young, as brisk, as when from heav'n
Before the author of the world she trip'd
To Paradise rejoicing: the light breeze
Wafts to the sense a thousand odours; Hark!
The cheerful musick that attends.

O Man,
Would on thyself alone the awful doom
Of death had past. It grieves me to the soul
To think how soon the blooming year shall fade,
How soon the leafy honours of the vale
Be shed, the blossom nipt, and the bare branch
How dreary music in the ear of winter.
Yet let us live, and while we may, rejoice,
And not our present joy disturb, with thought
Of evils sure to come, and by no art
Be shun'd.

Come hither, fool, that vainly think'st
Thine only is the art to plumb the depth

Of

Of truth and wisdom. 'Tis a friend that calls,
And has some honest pity left for thee,
O thoughtless stubborn Sceptic. Look abroad,
And tell me, shall we to blind chance ascribe
The scene so wonderful, so fair, and good?
Shall we no farther search than sense will lead,
To find the glorious cause that so delights
The eye and ear, and scatters all about
Ambrosial perfumes? O there is a hand
That operates unseen, and regulates
The vast machine we tread on. Yes, there is
Who first created the great world, a work
Of deep construction, complicately wrought,
Wheel within wheel; tho' 'tis in vain we strive
To trace remote effects thro' the thick maze
Of movements intricate, confus'd and strange,
Up to the great Artificer that made,
And guides the whole. What if we see him not?
No more can we behold the busy soul
That animates ourselves. Man to himself

Is

Is all a miracle. I cannot see
The latent cause, yet such I know there is,
That gives the body motion, nor can tell
By what strange impulse, the so ready limb
Performs the purposes of will. How then
Shall thou or I, who cannot span ourselves,
In this our narrow vessel, comprehend
The being of a God. Go to the shore,
Cast in thy slender angle, and draw out
The huge Leviathan. Compress the deep,
And shut it up within the hollow round
Of the small hazel nut. Or freight the shell
Of snail or cockle, with the glorious fun,
And all the worlds that live upon his beams,
The goodly apparatus that rides round
The glowing axle-tree of heaven. Then come,
And I will grant 'tis thine to scale the height
Of wisdom infinite, and comprehend
Secrets incomprehensible; to know
There is no God, and what the potent cause

That

That the revolving universe upholds,
And not requires a deity at hand.

O tell me not, most subtle disputant,
That I shall die, the wick of life consum'd,
And spite of all my hopes drop in the grave,
Never to rise again. Will the great God,
Who thus by annual miracle restores
The perish'd year, and youth and beauty gives,
By resurrection strange, where none was ask'd,
Leave only man to be the scorn of time
And sport of death? Shall only he one spring,
One hasty summer, and one autumn see,
And then to winter irredeemable
Be doom'd, cast out, rejected, and despis'd?
Tell me not so, or by thyself enjoy
The melancholy thought. Am I deceiv'd?
So let me be for ever. If I err,
It is an error sweet and lucrative.
For should not heaven a farther course intend

Than the short race of life, I am at least
Thrice happier than thee, ill-boding fool,
Who striv'ft in vain the awful doom to fly
That I not fear. But I *shall* live again,
And still on that sweet hope shall my soul feed.
A medicine it is, that with a touch
Heals all the pains of life; a precious balm,
That makes the tooth of sorrow venomless,
And of her hornet sting so keen disarms
Cruel Adversity —

A truce to thought,
And come, Alcanor, Julia, Isabel,
Eliza come, and let us o'er the fields,
Across the down, or thro' the shelving wood,
Wind our uncertain way. Let fancy lead,
And be it ours to follow, and admire,
As well we may, the graces infinite
Of nature. Lay aside the sweet resource
That winter needs, and may at will obtain,

Of authors chaste and good, and let us read
The living page, whose ev'ry character
Delights and gives us wisdom. Not a tree,
A plant, a leaf, a blossom, but contains
A folio volume. We may read and read
And read again, and still find something new,
Something to please, and something to instruct,
E'en in the noisome weed. See, ere we pass
Alcanor's threshold, to the curious eye
A little monitor presents her page
Of choice instruction, with her snowy bells;
The lily of the vale. She nor affects
The public walk, nor gaze of mid-day sun;
She to no state or dignity aspires,
But silent and alone puts on her suit,
And sheds her lasting perfume, but for which
We had not known there was a thing so sweet
Hid in the gloomy shade. So when the blast
Her sister tribes confounds, and to the earth

D

Stoops

Stoops their high heads that vainly were expos'd,
She feels it not, but flourishes anew,
Still shelter'd and secure. And to the storm
That makes the high elm couch, and rends the oak,
The humble lily spares. A thousand blows
That shake the lofty monarch on his throne,
We lesser folks feel not. Keen are the pains
Advancement often brings. To be secure,
Be humble; to be happy, be content.
'Tis not all gold, Eliza, that the eye
Delights in. To command a coach and fix,
Be hight *my Lady*, or *your Grace*, to lead
In fashion, shine at court, be cloth'd in silk,
And make an artificial day, thick-set
With eye-distracting jewels, are but chains
That lift you from the crowd, to be the mock
Of hissing envy; steps they are, that lead
Unwary maids to fortune's pillory,
To be the butt of undeserv'd reproach

And

And lying slander. Have you not observ'd
The idle school-boy, through a field of wheat
Scarce ripe, returning home, with what delight
He trims a switch, and strikes at the full ear
Most eminent, and still walks on and strikes?
So Fortune sports with you, ye great, and still
As one above another climbs, condemns,
And makes him shorter by the head: Happy,
No doubt, Alcanor were, should it so chance
An eddy seize him in the stream of life,
And whirl him to a throne, of all this life
Grand Metropolitan; but trust me, Sir,
Nor Laud, nor Tillotson would stoop again
To bear the golden weight. Only with him
Sweet peace abounds, and only he escapes
The poison'd shafts of obloquy and wrong,
Who hides his virtue in content; and like
This modest lily, wins our best regard
By seeking to avoid it. Virtue too

Will ever thus her lone retreat betray,
 And, spite of privacy, be sought and seen;
 For she has fragrance that delights the sense
 Of Men and Angels, yea, of God himself.—

But come, we loiter. Pass unnotic'd by
 The sleepy crocus, and the staring daisy,
 The courtier of the sun. What see we there?
 The love-sick cowslip, that her head inclines
 To hide a bleeding heart. And here's the meek
 And soft-eyed primrose. Dandelion this,
 A college youth that flashes for a day
 All gold; anon he doffs his gaudy suit,
 Touch'd by the magic hand of some grave Bishop,
 And all at once, by commutation strange,
 Becomes a Reverend Divine. How sleek!
 How full of grace! and in that globous wig
 So nicely trim'd, unfathomable stores,
 No doubt, of erudition most profound:

Each

Each hair is learned, and his awful phiz,
A well-drawn title-page, gives large account
Of matters strangely complicate within.
Place the two doctors each by each, my friends.
Which is the better? say. I blame not you,
Ye powder'd periwigs, that hardly hide,
With glossy suit and well-fed paunch to boot,
The understanding lean and beggarly.
But let me tell you, in the pompous globe
That rounds the dandelion's head, is couch'd
Divinity most rare. I never pass
But he instructs me with a still discourse,
That more persuades than all the vacant noise
Of pulpit rhetoric; for vacant 'tis,
And vacant must it be, by vacant heads
Supported.

Leave we them to mend, and mark
The melancholy hyacinth, that weeps
All night, and never lifts an eye all day.

How gay this meadow—like a gamefome boy
New-cloth'd, his locks fresh comb'd and powder'd, he
All health and fpirits. Scarce fo many ftars
Shine in the azure canopy of heav'n,
As king-cups here are fcatter'd, interspers'd
With filver daifies.

See, the toiling fwain
With many a fturdy ftroke cuts up at laft
The tough and finewy furze. How hard he fought
To win the glory of the barren wafte.
For what more noble than the vernal furze
With golden baskets hung? Approach it not,
For ev'ry bloffom has a troop of fwords
Drawn to defend it. 'Tis the treasury
Of Fays and Fairies. Here they nightly meet,
Each with a burnifh'd king-cup in his hand,
And quaff the fubtil ether. Here they dance
Or to the village chimes, or moody fong
Of midnight Philomel. The ringlet fee

Fantaftically

Fantastically trod. There, Oberon
His gallant train leads out, the while his torch
The glow-worm lights and dusky night illumes.
And there they foot it featly round, and laugh.
The sacred spot the superstitious ewe
Regards, and bites it not in reverence.
Anon the drowsy clock tolls One—the cock
His clarion sounds—the dance breaks off—the lights
Are quench'd—the music hush'd—they speed away
Swifter than thought, and still the break of day
Outrun, and chafing midnight as she flies
Pursue her round the globe. So Fancy weaves
Her flimsy web, while sober reason fits,
And smiling wonders at the puny work,
A net for her; then springs on eagle wing,
Constraint defies, and soars above the sun.
Not always such her flight. For croaking dames
And silly mothers oft conspire to clip
Her infant wing, and feed her full with fears,
Till all her energy expires, and she,

Caught in the snare of fancy, lives and quakes
Pris'ner for life. O thoughtless managers!

See where the sky-blue periwinkle climbs
Up to the cottage eaves, and hides the loam
And dairy lattice with a thousand eyes,
Pentagonally form'd, to mock the skill
Of proud geometers. See there the fern
Unclenching all her fingers, to distract
The plodding theorist, who little sees,
And tortures reason for the rest. Behold,
And trust him not, the feed. So idle boys
Delight in bubbles. So rank errors live,
Truth dies, and ev'ry day we need a Brown
To set a jangling world to rights,

No more:

But mark with how peculiar grace, yon wood
That clothes the weary steep, waves in the breeze
Her sea of leaves; thither we turn our steps,

And

And by the way attend the chearful sound
Of woodland harmony that always fills
The merry vale between. How sweet the song
Day's harbinger attunes ! I have not heard
Such elegant divisions drawn from art.

And what is he that wins our admiration ?
A little speck that floats upon the sun-beam.
What vast perfection cannot nature crowd
Into a puny point ! The nightingale,
Her solo anthem sung, and all that heard
Content, joins in the chorus of the day.
She, gentle heart, thinks it no pain to please,
Nor, like the moody songsters of the world,
Just shews her talent, pleases, takes affront,
And locks it up in envy.

Now we hear
The golden wood-pecker, that like the fool
Laughs loud at nothing. Now the restless pye,
So pert and garrulous. A gossip she,

And

And she has been to town to learn the news,
O you shall hear her tell, how being hid
In goody Grabson's beans, she overheard
The tattling dames relate, 'Lord, what d'ye think?
' The Parson's to be married—Betty Bounce,
' Will soon be brought to-bed—the 'Squire is sick—
' Julia has parted with her maid—they say
' Eliza paints, and Isabel's a shrew—
' More taxes yet—the minister's a fool—
' Corn will be cheap—what shall we farmers do?—
' My lady Bountiful has had a fit—
' Ay, let her die—they say she means to leave
' A fortune to the poor—good rest to her soul—
' She is no better than she should be—that
' 'Twixt you and I—.' And so from morn to night
Your scandal-monger prates, and tells you all
The secret springs that actuate the state,
The minister, the people. She can see,
With half an eye, who stands, who falls, who rises,
Who little merits, and who best deserves,

And

And so she murders truth, and propagates
The publick lie, extorting many a tear
And many a sigh from wounded innocence,
O, Isabel, if ev'ry idle word
Have weight in heav'n, what deed so rarely good
Can turn the scale in favour of that fool,
Who prattles injury, and worth defames,
From gay fifteen to tremulous fourscore!

Hark, how the cuckoo mocks the village bells.
The jay attend, a very termagant
That scolds all day. Yes, she has wedded been
A full three weeks, and would be maid again.

Observe the glossy raven in the grass
Making rude courtship to his negro mate.
O he's a flatterer, and in his song,
If such it may be call'd, her charms recites.
He tells her of her bosom black as jet,
Her taper leg, her penetrating eye,

Her

Her length of beak, her soft and silky wing,
Her voice so tunable; then waddles round,
Begins again, and hopes she will be kind.
But all in vain. Alarm'd, he claps his wing
And flies; she much against her will pursues.

I love to see the little goldfinch pluck
The groundfil's feather'd seed, and twit and twit;
And then in bow'r of apple blossoms perch'd,
Trim his gay suit, and pay us with a song.
I would not hold him pris'ner for the world,

The chimney-haunting swallow too, my eye
And ear well pleases. I delight to see
How suddenly he skims the glassy pool,
How quaintly dips, and with a bullet's speed
Whisks by. I love to be awake, and hear
His morning song twitter'd to young-eyed day.

But most of all it wins my admiration,
To view the structure of this little work,

A bird's

A bird's nest. Mark it well, within, without.

No tool, had he that wrought, no knife to cut,

No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,

No glue to join; his little beak was all.

And yet how nearly finish'd. What nice hand

With ev'ry implement and means of art,

And twenty years apprenticeship to boot,

Could make me such another? Fondly then

We boast of excellence, whose noblest skill

Instinctive genius foils.

The bee observe;

She too an artist is, and laughs at man

Who calls on rules the flighty hexagon

With truth to form; a cunning architect,

That at the roof begins her golden work,

And builds without foundation. How she toils,

And still from bud to bud, from flow'r to flow'r,

Travels the livelong day. Ye idle drones,

That rather pilfer than your bread obtain

By

By honest means like these, look here, and learn
How good, how fair, how honourable 'tis
To live by industry. The busy tribes
Of bees so emulous, are daily fed
With heaven's peculiar manna. 'Tis for them,
Unwearied alchymists, the blooming world
Nectarious gold distils. And bounteous heav'n,
Still to the diligent and active good,
Their very labour makes the certain cause
Of future wealth. The little traveller
That toils so chearfully from flow'r to flow'r,
For ever singing as she goes, herself
Bears on her wings and thighs the genial dust
The barren blossom needs, and the young seed
Impregnates for herself, else unprolific.
I cannot love thy art, hard-hearted man,
That teaches to depopulate the hive,
And with the death of thousands win unhurt
The precious treasures industry had earn'd.
O burglary, how base, and back'd withal

With murder ! But what links of law can bind
Imperious appetite, a haughty steed,
That having rang'd his pasture free as air,
Disdains the bit, and mounted once again,
Runs madly on, high overleaps all bounds,
And flings his rider to an early grave.

How peaceable and solemn a retreat
This wood affords. I love to quit the glare
Of sultry day for shadows cool as these.
The sober twilight of this winding way,
Lets fall a serious gloom upon the mind
That checks, but not appals. Such are the haunts
Religion loves, a meek and humble maid
Whose tender eye bears not the blaze of day.
And here with Meditation hand in hand
She walks, and feels her often wounded heart
Renew'd and heal'd. Speak softly, we intrude.
A whisper is too loud for solitude
So mute and still.

So

So have I gone at night,
When the faint eye of day was hardly clos'd,
And turn'd the grating key that kept the door
Of church or chapel, to enjoy alone
The mournful horrors that impending night
And painted windows shed, along the dark
And scarce to be distinguish'd aisle. My foot
Has stood and paus'd, half startled at the sound
Of it's own tip-toe pace. I've held my breath,
And been offended that my nimble heart
Should throb so audibly. I would not hear
Aught else disturb the silent reign of death,
Save the dull ticking of a restless clock.
That calls me home, and leads the thoughtful soul
Through mazes of reflection, till she feels
For what and whom she lives. Ye timid fair,
I never saw the sheeted ghost steal by,
I never heard th' unprison'd dead complain
And gibber in my ear, though I have lov'd
The yawning time of night, and travel'd round
And

And round again the mansions of the dead,
Yet I have heard, what fancy well might deem
Sufficient proof of both, the prowling owl
Sweep by, and with a hideous shriek awake
The church-yard echo, and I too have stood
Harrow'd and speechless at the dismal sound.
But here she frights us not. Such scenes as these
No ghost frequents. If any spirits here,
They are as gentle as the eve of day,
And only come to turn our wand'ring steps
From lurking danger. With what easy grace
This footway winds about. Shew me designs
That please us more. What strict geometer
Can carve his yew, his quickset, or his box,
To half its elegance? I would not see
A thousand paces on, nor have my way
Too strictly serpentine. If there be art,
Let it be hid in nature. Wind the path,
But be not bound to follow Hogarth's line.
I grant it beauty, but too often seen,

E

That

That beauty pleases not. I love to meet
A sudden turn like this, that stops me short,
Extravagantly devious, and invites
Or up the hill or down; then winds again,
By reeling drunkard trod, and all at once
Ends in a green-sward waggon way, that like
Cathedral aisle compleatly roof'd with branches,
Runs thro' the gloomy wood from top to bottom,
And has at either end a gothic door
Wide open. Yet we tarry not, nor tread
With hardly sensible advance the way
That mocks our toil; but having gaz'd awhile
At the still view below, the living scene
Inimitable nature has hung up
At the vault's end, we disappear again,
And follow still the flexile path, conceal'd
In shady underwood. Nor sometimes scorn
Under the high majestic oak to sit,
And comment on his leaf, his branch, his arm
Paternally extended, his vast girth,

And ample hoop above. To him that loves
To walk with contemplation, ev'ry leaf
Affords a tale concluding with a moral.
The very hazel has a tongue to teach,
The birch, the maple, horn-beam, beech, and ash.

But these detain us not, for the faint sun
Puts on a milder countenance, and skirts
The undulated clouds that cross his way
With glory visible. His axle cools,
And his broad disk, tho' fervent, not intense,
Foretells the near approach of matron night.
Ye fair, retreat! Your drooping flowers need
Wholesome refreshment. Down the hedge-row path
We hasten home, and only slack our speed
To gaze a moment at the custom'd gap,
That all so unexpectedly presents
The clear cerulean prospect down the vale.
Dispers'd along the bottom flocks and herds,
Hayricks and cottages, beside a stream

That filverly meanders here and there;
And higher up, corn-fields, and pastures, hops,
And waving woods, and tufts, and lonely oaks,
Thick interspers'd as Nature best was pleas'd.
I could not pass this view, nor stay to feast,
For all the wealth of Ind. Ingenious painter,
Why leave a land so delicately cloth'd
To gather beauties on a foreign shore?
'Twas here my Shakespear caught his living art,
And who can paint like him? To British eyes
Shew British beauties. Who can choose but love?
Paint me the fair ones of my native isle;
Your canvass shall have charms no time can kill.
The foreign belle, though fair, attracts me not.

Another moment pause, and to the vale
Look back from the calm height we tread. See where
The gamesome school-boys, once again dismiss'd,
Feel all the sweets of liberty, and drive
The speedy hours away at the brisk game

Of social cricket. It delights me much
To see them run, and hear the chearful shout
Sent up for victory—I cannot tell
What rare effect the mingled sound may yield,
Of huntsmen, hounds, and horns, to the firm heart,
That never feels a pain for flying puffs;
To me it gives a pleasure far more sweet,
To hear the cry of infant jubilee
Exulting thus. Here all is innocent,
And free from pain, which the resounding chase,
With all its sturdy clamours cannot drown,
E'en tho' it pour along a thund'ring peal,
Strong as the deep artillery of heav'n.

Now turn, and from the pleasant summit view
Alcanor's cell. Before, the garden see
So trim and spruce; behind, the vast domain
Of cow and truant poney, that approves
All pastures but his own. Seen thro' the trees,

It seems, methinks, a parti-colour'd spot,
Upon a sampler little Miss has work'd
To please her grandam. Love it still, ye fair,
Enjoy it still, Alcanor. Here who will
May feel a satisfaction truly sweet,
That York or Lambeth cannot give. Who strays,
Shall taste a thousand pains unfelt at home.
We fondly think the land of happiness
Is any where but here. And so we quit
The little bliss we own for less, and learn
From painful circumstance, the more we stray,
The more we want relief. The troubled heart
That harbours discontent, feeds a disease
No change of place, no medicine can cure,
Happy the man who truly loves his home,
And never wanders farther from his door
Than we have gone to-day; who feels his heart
Still drawing homeward, and delights like us
Once more to rest his foot on his own threshold.

Alcanor,

Alcanor, Julia, Isabel, Eliza,
 Here let us pause, and ere still night advance
 To shut the books of heav'n, look back and see
 What commendable act has sprung to-day.
 Ah! who can boast? The little good we do
 In all the years of life will scarce outweigh
 The follies of an hour. Let this suffice,
 We had a heart that was inclin'd to do,
 Much better than we did.
 Adieu, ye fair,
 We leave you to your task, nor give you aid
 As wont. Rear'd by your hands alone, the flower
 Shall have a ruddier blush, a sweeter fragrance.
 Alcanor come, and let us once again
 Descend into the valley, and enjoy
 The sober peace of the still summer's eve.
 We have no blush to lose, our freckled cheek
 The sun not blisters, nor the night-dew blasts.
 Such is the time the musing poet loves.

Now vigorous imagination teems,
 And, warm with meditation, brings to birth
 Her admirable thought. I love to hear
 The silent rook to the high wood make way
 With hissing wing, to mark the wanton mouse,
 And see him gambol round the primrose head,
 'Till the still owl comes smoothly sailing by,
 And with a shrill *to-whit* breaks off his dance,
 And sends him scouring home, to hear the cur
 Of the night-loving partridge, or the swell
 Of the deep curfew from afar. And now
 It pleases me to mark the hooting owl,
 Perch'd on the naked hop-pole, to attend
 The distant cataract, or farmer's cur
 That bays the northern lights or rising moon,
 Then let me steal along the woody lane,
 To hear thy song so various, gentle bird,
 The queen of night, transporting Philomel,
 I name thee not to give my feeble lines
 A grace else wanted, for I love thy song,

And

And often have I stood to hear thee sing,
When the clear moon, with Cytherean smile,
Emerging from an eastern cloud, has shot
A look of pure benevolence and joy
Into the heart of night. Yes, I have stood
And mark'd thy varied note, and frequent pause,
Thy brisk and melancholy mood, with heart
Sincerely pleas'd. And, Oh! methought, no note
Can equal thine, sweet bird, of all that sing,
How easily the chief! Yet have I heard
What pleases me still more: the human voice
In serious sweetness flowing from the heart
Of unaffected woman. I could hark
Till the round world dissolv'd, to the pure strain
Love teaches, gently Modesty inspires.
But tease me not, ye self-conceited fools,
Who with a loud, insufferable squall
Insult our ears, or hum a noiseless tune
Disdaining to be heard; the while ye grin,
To shew a set of teeth newly repair'd,

Or

Or shrink and shrug, to make the crowd admire
Your strange grimaces practis'd at the glass.
O! I abhor it. I had rather hear
A pedlar's kit besceape a dancing dog.

Melodious bird, good night; good night Alcanor!
Let us not trespass on the hours of rest,
For we must steal from morning to repay them.
And who would lose the animated smile
Of dawning day, for th' austere frown of night?
I grant her well accoutred in her suit
Of dripping sable, powder'd thick with stars,
And much applaud her as she passes by
With a replenish'd horn on either brow;
But more I love to see awaking day
Rise with a fluster'd cheek; a careful maid
That fears she has outlept the 'custom'd hour,
And leaves her chamber blushing. Hence to rest,
I will not prattle longer to detain you
Under the dewy canopy of night.

So

So have I sung Alcanor and the fair,
Thro' the slow walk and long beloiters'd day
Of early summer. Let him read that will;
And blame me not, if in an afternoon
I hardly stray a single mile from home.
It is my humour. Let him speed that will,
And fly like cannon-shot from post to post;
I love to stop, and quit the public road,
To gain a summit, take a view, or pluck
An unknown blossom. What if I dismount,
And leave my steed to graze the while I sit
Under the pleasant lee, or idly roam
Athwart the pasture, diligent to mark
What passes next? 'Tis English blood that flows
Under the azure covert of these veins.
I love my liberty; and if I sing,
Will sing to please myself, bound by no rule,
The subject of no law.—I cannot think
The path of excellence is only hit
By servile imitation. In a path
Peculiarly his own great Handel went,

And

And justly merits our applause, tho' not
The Homer of his art. In a new path
Went Shakespear, nobly launching forth,
And who shall say he has not found perfection,
Tho' not a Sophocles. Ye shallow wits,
Who bid us coast it in the learned track,
Nor quit the sight of shore, there is in art
A world unknown, whose treasures only he
Shall spy, and well deserve, who proudly scorns
The wither'd laurel, and exulting steers
Far from the custom'd way. My slender bark
Perchance has rush'd into a boist'rous sea
That soon shall overwhelm her: yet I fear
No storms the furious elements can rouse,
And if I fail, shall deem it noble still
To founder in a brave attempt. Once more
The cheerful breeze sets fair; we fill our sail
And scud before it. When the critic starts,
And angrily unties his bags of wind,
Then we lay to, and let the blast go by.

AT once we rush into the heart of June,
And find Alcanor at the noon of day
Laborious in his garden. The warm sun
Is clouded, and the fluctuating breeze
Calls him from nicer labour, to attend
The vegetable progress. Mark we now
A thousand great effects that spring from toil,
Unfung before. The martial pea observe,
In square battalion rang'd, line after line
Succesive; the gay bean, her hindmost ranks
Stript of their blossoms; the thick-scatter'd bed
Of soporific lettuce; the green hill
Cover'd with cucumbers. All these and more,
As carrots, parsnips, onions, cabbages,
Potatoes, turnips, radishes, my Muse
Disdains not. She can stray well-pleas'd, and pluck
The

The od'rous leaf of marj'ram, baum, or mint;
Then smile to think how near the neighbourhood
Of rue and wormwood, in her thoughtful eye
Resembling life, that ever thus brings forth
In quick succession bitter things and sweet.
Nor scorns she to observe the thriving sage,
That well becomes the garden of a clerk;
The wholesome camomile, and fragrant thyme.
All these thy pains, Alcanor, propagate,
Support, and feed. Let the fat Doctor laugh,
Who only toils to satisfy the calls
Of appetite insatiate, and retires,
Good honest soul, offended at the world,
Of pure devotion, to his pipe and pot,
And whiffs and sleeps his idle hours away.
O! let him laugh. A life of labour yields
Sweeter enjoyment than his gouty limbs
Have sense to feel. It gives the body health,
Agility, and strength, and makes it proof
Against the fang of pain. It stops the course

Of

Of prodigal contagion, scares away
The scythe of time, and turns the dart of death.
And hence the mind unwonted force derives;
Recruited oft by labour, to her work
Strong as a giant she returns, and rolls
Her Sisyphæan ball with wond'rous ease
Up to the mountain's top. O 'tis the soul
Of poesy and wit! Then follow still
The happy task, nor scorn to feel, Alcanor,
How passing grateful 'tis to reap the fruits
Of willing toil. The board of industry,
By her own labour frugally supplied,
Gives to her food an admirable zest,
Unknown to indolence, that half asleep,
With palateless indifference surveys
The smoking feast of plenty.

I have stray'd
Wild as the mountain bee, and cull'd a sweet
From ev'ry flow'r that beautified my way.

Ah!

Ah ! how could I forget thy charms so long,
Surpassing Dorothy, the sweetest thing
These bitter times afford. O let me seek
Thee fairest, foulest of the human race,
And sing thy beauties, like the stinging drone,
That, driven from the hive, a refuge seeks
In the dank sewer or fane of Cloacin !
See where she goes with vast becoming strides,
And man-like majesty, swinging her arms,
Alternate pendulums, that heavily
Move to and fro, as I have seen in towns
The handles of a pump. Who would not love?
Celestial maid, my charming non-pareil,
Turn to the supplicating voice that woos,
And shed one sweet and soul-reviving smile
Upon a captive poet. Let me see
Yet once again the formidable row,
From ear to ear, of never-cleansed teeth
In saffron uniform. O let me see
Thy broad hysteric grin, thy shining face,

And

And greasy locks, nor ever follow thus
Unheard, thy slipshod and undarned heel.
Come, let me place thee by the flaunting belle
That trips it lightly to the city ball.
Stay, airy madam, why so hasty? stay,
And learn who best deserves, or thou, or she.
Is Dorothy uncleanly? so art thou.
Her teeth are all her own, thine false and borrow'd.
And should she to a meagre-dentist pawn
The comely row, 'tis ten to one thy lips
Receive them next. O filthy usurpation!
Who dares approach the lips of Dorothy,
Shall find no doubt a healthful breath behind.
Who thee salutes, by that fair mouth induc'd,
Shall be astounded at the foetid stench
That issues from it. Health and youth are fled,
And all their odors gone, seduc'd away
By late debauch. Say, is that cheek thine own,
Or borrow'd from the pencil? Has no art
Been busy there to make the rose revive?

Is all that fairness thine? No, squalid wretch,
Thy hue is hateful:—But for thy perfumes,
And the kind aid of paint and sweet pomade,
We could not live within a thousand leagues
Of such a fearful pest. The shining face
Of graceless Dorothy, tho' far, far short
Of what we deem most fair and worthy touch,
Outdoes thy plaister'd cheek, as much as she
May be herself outdone. Those greasy locks,
That hang in ropes from her once-whiter cap,
Grew on the head they grace. But where grew thine?
Bought of some lousy wench that would have bread
Nor be at pains to earn it, or purloin'd
At midnight hour from a new-buried corpse.
In rags is Dorothy, in silk art thou;
But she in rags is honest; knavish, lewd,
And discontent art thou, tho' clad in silk.
Change dress, and who excels? Or search the mind,
And see who triumphs there? It may be thine
To speak a dialect to her unknown,

To lisp in terms of fashion, and retail
A few mean scraps of French; but, trust me, she
Her native language understands as well,
Less taught. She too can boast a store as large
Of useful knowledge, for ye both have none.
But ignorance in her was the hard lot
Of strict necessity:—She could not buy
Golden improvement, for she finds the day
Scarce equal to her toil, tho' all she asks
Be bread. In you distaste and idleness,
Money and time ill-spent, were all the cause.
Thy care was only to be gay without,
And beggarly within. For what know you
Of Virtue, or Religion, or aught else
Deserving praise? You write, perhaps, and read:
To what good purpose? To corrupt the soul,
And give it back to him who gave it you,
So spotted, as to make his angels blush,
And cause the Deity himself to turn
And hide his countenance. O blame not time!

The mind that thirsts no obstacle can thwart;
It has a thousand shifts to sink the mine
And purify its gold. You may be stiff,
And look on Dolly with disdainful eye,
But she's your equal here, and you must stand
Much after her in heav'n.

Is there a man
For wisdom eminent? seek him betimes.
He will not shun thee, though thy frequent foot
Wear out the pavement at his door. Ye fair,
Be sedulous to win the man of sense;
And fly the empty fool. Shame the dull boy
Who leaves at college what he learnt at school,
And whips his academic hours away,
Cas'd in unwrinkled buck-skin and tight boots,
More studious of his hunter than his books.
O! had ye sense to see what powder'd apes
Ye oft admire, the idle boy for shame
Would lay his racket and his mast aside,

And love his tutor and his desk. Time was
When ev'ry woman was a judge of arms
And military exploit: 'twas an age
Of admirable heroes. And time was
When women dealt in Hebrew, Latin, Greek;
No dunces then, but all were deeply learn'd,
I do not wish to see the female eye
Waste all its lustre at the midnight lamp;
I do not wish to see the female cheek
Grow pale with application. Let their care
Be to preserve their beauty; that secur'd,
Improve the judgment, that the loving fair
May have an eye to know the man of worth,
And keep secure the jewel of her charms
From him that ill deserves. Let the spruce beau,
That lean, sweet-scented, and palav'rous fool,
Who talks of honour and his sword, and plucks
The man that dares advise him by the nose;
That puny thing that hardly crawls about,
Reduc'd by wine and women, yet drinks on,

And vapours loudly o'er his glass, resoly'd
 To tell a tale of nothing, and outswear
 The northern tempest; let that fool, I say,
 Look for a wife in vain, and live despis'd.

I would that all the fair ones of this isle
 Were such as one I knew. Peace to her soul,
 She lives no more. And I a genius need
 To paint her as she was. Most like, methinks,
 That amiable maid the poet drew,
 Stealing a glance from heav'n, and call'd her Portia.
 Happy the man, and happy sure he was,
 So wedded. Blest with her, he wander'd not
 To seek for happiness; 'twas his at home.
 How often have I paus'd, and chain'd my tongue,
 To hear the music of her sober words!
 How often have I wonder'd at the grace
 Instruction borrow'd from her eye and cheek!
 Surely that maid is worth a nation's gold,
 Who has such rich resources in herself

For

From them she rears. A mother well inform'd
Entails a blessing on her infant charge
Better than riches; an unfailing cruse
She leaves behind her, which the faster flows
The more 'tis drawn; where ev'ry soul may feed,
And nought diminish of the public stock.

Shew me a maid so fair in all your ranks,
Ye crowded boarding-schools. Are ye not apt
To taint the infant mind, to point the way
To fashionable folly, strew with flow'rs
The path of vice, and teach the wayward child
Extravagance and pride? Who learns in you
To be the prudent wife, the pious mother?
To be her parents' staff, or husband's joy?
'Tis you dissolve the links that once held fast
Domestic happiness. 'Tis you untie
The matrimonial knot; 'tis you divide
The parent and his child. O! 'tis to you
We owe the ruin of our dearest bliss.

The best instructor for the growing lass
 Is she that bare her. Let *her* first be taught,
 And we shall see the path of virtue smooth
 With often treading. She can best dispense
 That frequent medicine the soul requires,
 And make it grateful to the tongue of youth,
 By mixture of affection. She can charm
 When others fail, and leave the work undone.
 She will not faint, for she instructs her own.
 She will not torture, for she feels herself.
 So education thrives, and the sweet maid
 Improves in beauty, like the shapeless rock
 Under the sculptor's chisel, till at length
 She undertakes her progress thro' the world,
 A woman fair and good, as child for parent,
 Parent for child, or man for wife could wish.
 Say, man, what more delights thee than the fair?
 What should we not be patient to endure
 If they command? We rule the noisy world,
 But they rule us. Then teach them how to guide,
 And

And hold the rein with judgment. Their applause
 May once again restore the quiet reign
 Of virtue, love, and peace, and yet bring back
 The blush of folly, and the shame of vice.

I ride without a rein, and thence it is
 My ambling Pegasus oft turns aside,
 And quits the publick way for the cool lane,
 Or bears me to the door of many a fool
 I had not else observ'd. No wonder then
 I rap so loudly at your gilded doors,
 Ye female guides, that lead our lambs astray,
 And bid you be at home, ye thoughtless dames,
 Who trust your offspring with the hungry wolf.
 Once more I turn, and once again observe
 Alcanor in his garden, not alone,
 For Isabel is there. The day declines,
 And now the falling sun offends them not.
 She rears the fainting flow'r, and feeds its root,
 Ye botanists, I cannot talk like you,

And

And give to ev'ry flow'r its name and rank,
Taught by Linnæus; yet I find in all
Or known or unknown, in the garden rais'd,
Or nurtur'd in the hedge-row, or the field,
A secret virtue, that attracts my eye
And meliorates my heart. And much I love
To see the fair one bind the straggling pink,
Cheer the sweet rose, the lupin, and the stock,
And lend a staff to the still gadding pea.
I cannot count the number of the stars,
Nor call them by their names, much less relate
What vegetable tribes Alcanor loves,
The fair ones rear. I will not swell my song
With the proud list of forces led from Greece,
Or angels tumbled headlong into hell.
Yet let me praise the garden-loving maid,
Who innocently thus concludes the day.
Ye fair, it well becomes you. Better thus
Cheat time away, than at the crowded rout,
Rustling in silk, in a small room, close-pent,

And

And heated e'en to fusion; made to breathe
A rank contagious air, and fret at whiff,
Or sit aside to sneer and whisper scandal.

In such a silent, cool, and wholesome hour,
The Author of the world came down from Heav'n
To walk in Paradise, well pleas'd to mark
The harmless deeds of new-created man.
And sure the silent, cool, and wholesome hour
May still delight him, our atonement made.
Who knows but as we walk he walks unseen,
And sees, and well approves the cheerful task
The fair one loves; he breathes upon the pink
And gives it odor, touches the sweet rose
And makes it glow, beckons the ev'ning dew
And sheds it on the lupin and the pea:
Then smiles on her, and covers all her cheek
With gay good humour, happiness, and health.
So all are passing sweet, and the young Eve
Feels all her pains rewarded, all her joys.

Perfect and unimpair'd. But who can love,
 Of heav'nly temper, to frequent your walks,
 Ye fashion-loying belles. The human soul
 Your pestilent amusements hates; how then
 Shall he approve, who cannot look on guilt?

So day by day Alcanor and the fair
 Attend the garden studious, soon as eve
 Her cooling odors sheds, and the large sun
 Grows dim, and shoots his mellow rays oblique.

Nor these the only pleasures summer yields.
 They often wander at the close of day
 Along the shady lane, or thro' the wood,
 To pluck the ruddy strawberry, or smell
 The perfum'd breeze that all the fragrance steals
 Of honey-suckle, blossom'd beans, or clover;
 Or haply rifles from the new-made rick
 The hay's sweet odor, or the sweeter breath
 Of farmer's yard, where the still patient cow

Stands

Stands o'er the plenteous milk-pail ruminant.
Sometimes they stray at highest noon, when day
His garish eye has veil'd, and idly range
The new-mown pasture, mark the distant forge
Deep in the valley, jutting its low roof
Against the stream, close by the trickling floodgate,
And thither turn their steps. I love to see
How hardly some their frugal morsel earn;
It gives my own a zest, and serves to damp
The longing appetite of discontent.

See, pale and hollow-eyed, in his blue shirt,
Before the scorching furnace, reeking stands
The weary smith. A thund'ring water-wheel
Alternately uplifts his pond'rous pair
Of roaring bellows. He torments the coal
And stirs the melting ore, till all resolv'd
Into a perfect lump; then seizes fast
With his strong forceps the unwieldy mass,
And

And drags it glowing to the anvil. Eye
Can scarce attend it, so intense the heat.
He bears it all, and with one arm lets loose
Th' impatient stream. The heavy wheel moves round,
And ever and again lets fall the loud
And awful hammer, that confounds the ear,
And makes the firm earth shake. He turns the mass,
And works it into shape; till cooler grown,
He stops his wheel, and once again provokes
The dying cinders, and his half-done work
Buries in fire. Again he drags it forth,
And once more lifts it to the sturdy anvil.
There beaten long, and often turn'd, at length
'Tis done. He bears it hissing to the light,
An iron bar. Behold it well. What ~~is't,~~
But a just emblem of the lot of virtue.
For in this naughty world she cannot live,
Nor rust contract, nor mingle with alloy.
So the great Judge, to make her worthy heav'n,

Submits

Submits her to the furnace and the anvil,
'Till molten, bruis'd, and batter'd, she becomes
Spotless and pure, and leaves her dross behind.

And who shall grieve, and think his lot severe
Who well considers this? The slaving smith,
That wipes his flowing brow so fast, his bread
Earns at the bitter cost, expence of health.
In summer's hottest day he feeds his forge,
And stands expos'd to the distressful fire
That almost broils him dead. Yet what complaint
Makes he at fortune? He is well content
To toil at his infernal work, and breathe
A torrid atmosphere, so he may earn
A scant subsistence in this pinching world.
Ye idle rich, consider this, nor aim
At places, pensions, titles, coronets.
Ye lazy clerks, consider this, nor sue
For benefices, canonries, and mitres.
All might inherit ease, would they not long

To

To fill a braver office, and at times
Look down, and see how hard the drudging poor
Toils for a bare subsistence. Be content,
And happiness shall turn and follow you.
But she is coy as the unwedded maid,
And he that follows her is vexed in vain,
And may pursue for ever. Let her fly;
Shy fool, I follow not. If thou relent,
Feast at my board, and be a welcome guest.

So Summer glides along, and happy he
Who like Alcanor holds occasion fast,
And, duty done, enjoys the summer lounge.

So have I wander'd ere those days were past
That childhood calls her own. Ah! happy days
That recollection loves, unstain'd with vice,
Why were ye gone so soon? Did I not love
To quit my desk and ramble in the field,
To gather austere berries from the bush,

Or search the coppice for the clust'ring nut?
 Did I not always with a shout applaud,
 That welcome voice the holiday announc'd?
 Say, you that knew me, you that saw me oft
 Shut up my book elate, and dance for joy.
 O liberty! how passing sweet art thou
 To him that labours at the constant oar
 Sorely reluctant, to the pining boy
 That loves enlargement, and abhors his chain.

So on thy banks too, Isis, have I stray'd,
 A tassel'd student. Witness you that shad'
 My morning walk, my ramble at high noon,
 My evening voyage, an unskilful tar,
 To Godstow bound, or some inferior port,
 For strawberries and cream. What have we found
 In life's austerer hours, delectable
 As the long day so loiter'd? O ye grave
 And serious heads, who guard the twin retreats
 Of British learning, give the honest boy

His due indulgence. Let him range the field,
Frequent the publick walk, and stoutly tug
The ever-yielding oar. But mark him well,
And if he turn aside to vice or folly,
Shew him the rod, and let him feel you prize
The parent's happiness, the public good.
And you, ye thoughtless young, deem it not hard
If old experience check your wild career,
And call you home to think. Love the kind hand
That steadily corrects, and be not apt
To leave the student's for the jockey's part,
To drefs, to swear, to gamble, whore, and drink.
For so the taylor, gamester, rogue, and punk,
The cook, the surgeon, and the vintner thrive,
Learning decays, and the book-vender starves;
Save only he that reading circulates,
And earns a living of the smarting boy,
Who all day long lies writhing on his couch
Repentant, feeding his distemper'd mind
With plays and novels. Will ye thus repay

Parental goodness? Will ye thus apply
 Parental bounty? Who can wonder then,
 The parent's curse on Alma-mater lights,
 And the wide world re-echoes with the sound
 Of terrible reproach. For who can live
 And not condemn, who sees the swagg'ring dunce,
 The knave, the drunkard, and the debauchee,
 Mix with the sacred band of God's apostles?

NOW comes July, and with his fervid noon
 Unnerves the hand of toil. The mower sleeps—
 The sun-burnt maid rakes feebly—the hot swain
 Pitches his load reluctant—the faint steer,
 Lashing his sides, draws fulkily along
 The slow encumber'd wain. The hedge-row now
 Delights, or the still shade of silent lane,

Or cool impending arbor, there to read,
Or talk and laugh, or meditate and sleep.

There let me sit to see the brewing storm
Collect its dusky horrors, and advance
To bellow sternly in the ear of night;
To see th' Almighty electrician come,
Making the clouds his chariot. Who can stand
When he appears? The conscious creature flies,
And skulks away, afraid to see his God
Charge and recharge his dreadful battery.
For who so pure his lightning might not blast,
And be the messenger of justice? Who
Can stand expos'd, and to his judge exclaim,
' My heart is cleansed, turn thy storm away.'
Fear not, ye fair, who with the naughty world
Have seldom mingled. Mark the rolling storm,
And let me hear you tell, when morning comes,
With what tremendous howl the furious blast
Blew the large show'r in heavy cataract

Against

Against your window; how the keen, the quick,
And vivid lightning quiver'd on your bed,
And how the deep artillery of heav'n
Broke loose, and shook your coward habitation.
Fear not; for if a life of innocence,
And that which we deem virtue here below,
Can hold the forked bolt, ye may presume
To look and live. Yet be not bold, but shew
Some pious dread, some grave astonishment.
For all our worthy deeds are nothing worth,
And if the solemn tempest cut us short
In our best hour, we are in debt to heav'n.

So when the trumpet blew and waxing loud
And louder still, became exceeding loud,
That all the people trembled, and the mount
Smok'd at the touch of God, and shook, a voice
Commanded priests and people to beware,
Not to break thro' and gaze, lest the pure God,

Whose spotless nature cannot brook the sight
Of aught unsanctified, break forth and slay

The storm subsided, and the day begun,
Who would not walk along the sandy way,
To smell the shower's fragrance, see the sun,
With his sheer eye ascend the zenith joyous,
Mark the still-rumbling cloud crowding away,
Indignant, and embrace the gentle breeze,
That idly wantons with the dewy leaf,
And shakes the pearly rain-drop to the ground.
How sweet the incense of reviving flow'rs!
Ye must abroad, ye fair. The angry night
Has done you mischief. Ev'ry plant will need
Your kindly hand to rear its falling head.

Come not, Sir Swithin, with a cloudy face,
Ill-ominous; for old tradition says,
If Swithin weep, a deluge will ensue,

A forty days of rain. The swain believes,
 And blesses fultry Swithin if he smiles,
 But curses if he frowns. So crazy dames
 Teach the apt boy a thousand ugly signs,
 Which riper judgment cannot shake aside.
 And so the path of life is rough indeed,
 And the poor boy feels double smart, compell'd
 To trudge it barefoot on the naked flint.
 For what is judgment and the mind inform'd,
 Your christian armour, gospel-preparation,
 But sandals for the feet, that tread with ease,
 Nor feel those harsh asperities of life,
 Which ignorance and superstition dread.
 I much admire we ever should complain
 That life is sharp and painful, when ourselves
 Create the better half of all our woe.
 Who can he blame who shudders at the sight
 Of his own candle, and foretels with grief
 A winding sheet? who starts at the red coal
 That bounces from his fire, and picks it up,

His hair on end, a coffin? spills his salt,
 And dreads disaster? dreams of pleasant fields,
 And smells a corpse? and ever shuns with care
 The unpropitious hour to pare his nails?
 Such fears but ill become a soul that thinks,
 Let time bring forth what heavy plagues it will.
 Who pain anticipates, that pain feels twice,
 And often feels in vain. Yet, tho' I blame
 The man who with too busy eye unfolds
 The page of time, and reads his lot amiss,
 I can applaud to see the smiling maid,
 With pretty superstition pluck a rose,
 And lay it by till Christmas. I can look
 With much complacency on all her arts
 To know the future husband, Yes, ye fair,
 I deem it good to steal from years to come
 A share of happiness. We could not live,
 Did we not hope to-morrow would produce
 A better lot than we enjoy to-day.
 Hope is the dearest med'cine of the soul,

A sweet

A sweet oblivious antidote, that heals
The better half of all the pains of life.

Now o'er his corn, the sturdy farmer looks,
And swells with satisfaction, to behold
The plenteous harvest that repays his toil.
We too are gratified, and feel a joy
Inferior but to his, partakers all
Of the rich bounty Providence has strew'd
In plentiful profusion o'er the field.

Tell me ye fair, Alcanor tell me, what
Is to the eye more cheerful, to the heart
More satisfactive, than to look abroad,
And from the window see the reaper strip,
Look round, and put his sickle to the wheat?

Or hear the early mower whet his scythe,
And see where he has cut his founding way,
E'en to the utmost edge of the brown field
Of oats or barley? What delights us more,
Than studiously to trace the vast effects

Of unabated labour? to observe
How soon the golden field stands thick with sheaves?
How soon the oat and bearded barley fall,
In frequent lines before the hungry scythe?
The clatt'ring team now comes, and the swarth hind
Leaps down, and throws his frock aside, and plies
The shining fork. Down to the stubble's edge
The easy wain descends half built, then turns
And labours up again. From pile to pile
With rustling step the swain proceeds, and still
Bears to the groaning load the well-poiz'd sheaf.
The gleaner follows, and with studious eye,
And bended shoulders traverses the field
To find the scatter'd ear, the perquisite
By heaven's decree assign'd to them that need,
And neither sow nor reap. Ye that have sown,
And reap so plenteously, and find your barns
Too narrow to contain the harvest giv'n,
Be not severe, and grudge the needy poor
So small a portion. Scatter many an ear,

Nor

Nor let it grieve you to forget a sheaf
And overlook the loss. For he that gave
Will readily forgive the purpos'd wrong
Done to yourselves; nay more, will twice repay
The generous neglect. The field is clear'd;
No sheaf remains; and now the empty wain
A load less honorable waits. Vast toil succeeds.
And still the team retreats, and still returns
To be again full-fraught. Work on, ye swains,
And make one autumn of your lives, your toil
Still new, your harvest never done. Work on,
And stay the progress of the falling year,
And let the cheerful valley laugh and sing,
Crown'd with perpetual August. Never faint,
Nor ever let us hear the hearty shout
Sent up to heav'n, your annual work complete
And harvest ended. It may seem to you
The sound of joy, but not of joy to us.
We grieve to think how soon your toil has ceas'd,
How

How soon the plenteous year has shed her fruits,
And waits the slow approach of furly Winter.

One labour more the cheerful hand awaits;
Then the glad year is done. We seize with joy
The precious interval, and shape our walk
At early ev'ning down the meadow path;
Till sunk into the vale, fast by the brook
We spy the blooming hop, and with light heart
The glorious garden enter. Tell me not,
Ye who, in love with wealth, your days consume
Pent up in city stench, and smoke, and filth;
O tell me not of aught magnificent
Or fair as this, in all your public walks.
What are the charms your Ranelagh affords
Compar'd with ours? Search all your gardens round,
Ye shall not find e'en at your boasted Vaux
A haunt so neat, so elegant as this.
Long let us stray, and frequently repeat
Our ev'nings homage to the blooming hop.

Spare him, ye swains, pernicious insects spare,
Ye howling tempests, come not near my joy,
But let him hang till I have gaz'd my fill.
Then shall he fall, and his gay honours shed,
And your forbearance plenteously repay
With his abundant gold. Long let us stray,
Enjoy the grateful covert, and admire
The one continued cluster over-head
Of blossoms interwoven, and depending
E'en to the touch and smell. Long let us stray,
And ever as we come to the flat mead
And quit the garden with reluctance, then
When we behold the smiling valley spread
In gay luxuriance far before us, sheep
And oxen grazing, till the eye is staid,
The sinuous prospect turning from the view,
And all above us to the right and left
Enchanted woodland to the topmost hill,
Then let the village bells, as often wont,
Come swelling on the breeze, and to the sun

Half-set,

Half-set, ring merrily their ev'ning round.
 I ask not for the cause. It matters not
 What swain is wedded, what gay lass is bound
 To love for ay, to cherish and obey.
 It is enough for me to hear the sound
 Of the remote exhilarating peal,
 Now dying all away, now faintly heard,
 And now with loud and musical relapse
 Its mellow changes pouring on the ear.

So have I stood at eve on Isis' banks,
 To hear the merry Christ-church bells ring round.
 So have I sat too in thy honour'd shades
 Distinguish'd Magdalen, on Cherwell's brink,
 To hear thy silver Wolfey tones so sweet.
 And so too have I paus'd and held my oar,
 And suffer'd the flow stream to bear me home,
 No speed requir'd while Wykeham's peal was up.

NOW

NOW let September and October come,
Twin months of slaughter. Persecution starts,
And ere the dewy day be half awake
Begins her bloody work. The fields are throng'd
With licens'd murderers, who slay for sport.
So when the jealous Herod gave the word,
The cruel ruffian thirsted for the blood
Of helpless innocents. And so the sword,
Another Herod reigning, was let loose,
To spill the blood of sleeping Hugonots.
Alcanor joins them not. He envies none
The pleasures of the field, and much admires
To hear the squabble and the loud harangue,
And all for game; to see the British soul
So puny grown, it quarrels for a feather.

'Tis

'Tis a mean wretch, and scarce deserves to live
That cannot find amusements void of pain.

O undeserving parent, that neglects
To train the infant boy to deeds humane.
See how his sports, his pastimes, dearest child,
Are all to be indulg'd, whether he choose
To whip his nurse, to lash the sleeping puppy,
Or pinch the tail of unoffending puss.
Go, catch the surly beetle, and suspend
The harmless pris'ner by the wing or tail
To make the booby laugh. But if so loud
His well-deserv'd rebuke, the timid child
Stands off alarm'd, then let him see thee crush
The thing he fears. Or give it liberty,
Not unconstrained, as heav'n bestow'd it. No,
Set the gall'd pris'ner free, but lock his chain
Full-fast about him. Drive him to the field,
But pluck no arrow from his side. He's gone,
And feels that liberty is wond'rous sweet,

Tho'

Tho' the crook'd pin fast fixt, and trailing thread,
Admit no remedy. A while he lives—
His thread clings fast—he flutters, faints and dies.
Go, Tom, a ladder bring, and reach the nest.
'Tis but a sparrow's, and 'twill serve
To pacify the boy. What if the dam
In patient expectation sits, and hopes
Another day shall all her cares reward,
And bring to light her helpless progeny?
Forth from her high maternal office dragg'd
With rude indignity, behold she comes
A joyful victim to the callous boy.
He with delight her ruffled plumes surveys,
Seizes her nest, and the dear charge purloins,
Then with a frantic laugh down drops the eggs,
And blindfold hops to crush them as he goes.
Ah! hapless bird, yet happy still, if this
Be all the pain thy cruel foe intends.
Ah! what avail'd thy labour of an age

H

To

To weave the genial nest, with many a root
And many a straw far-fetch'd? 'Twas all in vain,
Half-starv'd Grimalkin claims thee for his prey,
And in his cruel paw fast-clutch'd devours
Relentless. Or the boy aware, himself
Cuts short existence, and allots to puss
Only the sever'd head. Ingenious fool,
Pert executioner, behold the blood
Of parent, and of offspring. Grin amain;
O thou hast done a deed that Heav'n abhors.
Let the wise parent laugh to see how well
His looby boy has learn'd to be humane.
Let him applaud the bloody deed, and spare
The well-earn'd rod. In thee, great state,
Eternal glory of the Gentile world,
Just Athens, had the beardless boy presum'd
A deed so villainous, the public arm
Had the mean youth chastis'd, till it had wak'd
A foul humane and sensible of wrong.

Behold

Behold and mark the sturdy boy, at length
Grown up to man (if such he may be call'd,
Possessing nothing human but the shape)
What are his sports? and how delights the dunce
From morn to night to spend the live-long day?
Can the dark Ethiopian change his skin?
Or can the Leopard at his will be white,
And lay his spots aside? From morn to eve
See how he toils with gen'rous intent
To be the murd'rer of the tim'rous hare,
To win the brush of Reynard nobly skill'd,
To vex the badger; or with cruel joy
Stoops o'er the cock-pit, eager to behold
The dying struggles of poor Chanticleer.
'Twas nature taught the gen'rous bird to fight,
And drive the bold intruder from his roost,
In care for thee, mean wretch, who hast supplied
The weapon nature kindly had refus'd,
Or made to strike in vain. Now mark his gait,

When morning hardly dawns, and from the hutch
He lets the full-ear'd pointer loose to range,
Well arm'd is he, within with morning dram,
Without with old furtout, thick shoes, and hose
Of leather, button'd to the buckskin'd knee,
So forth he fares, brave knight; but first he primes
And loads his burnish'd piece, then hangs his pouch,
His powder-horn, and whip with whistle tip
On his broad shoulders. Let me not forget,
What he might well forget, th' important bag,
To be ere long (for so he thinks) well lin'd
With pheasant, partridge, snipe, or tardy quail.
So mounts the popping Hudibras or style
Or crackling hedge, or leaps the muddy ditch,
His armor clatt'ring as he goes. I see
Where he has swept the silver dew away
Across the pasture. Now he climbs the gate,
And heys his dog to run the stubble round,
While he stands still, or scarcely moves a pace.

So have I seen the hasty minute-hand
Run round and round, while th' other idly stood,
Or seem'd to stand, and ever and anon
Bray'd loud to set him on his way again.
Take heed, take heed. With nose infallible
The silent pointer winds toward the game.
Now motionless he stands, one foot lift up,
His nostril wide-distended, and his tail
Unwag'd. Now speed my hero of the gun,
And when the sudden covey springs, let fly,
And miss them all. O I rejoice to see
When our amusements are so innocent
They give no pain at all. But spare the whip,
And if the wary covey springs too soon,
Let Sancho still be safe, and let not rage
Prompt thee to stamp upon his guiltless neck
Till the blood issues from his mouth and nose:
Much less let fly upon the faithful cur
The volley fate has spar'd, for he is staunch,
And true to thee as thou art false to him.

O thoughtless world, that will not be at pains
To cultivate humanity in youth.
'Tis hence we laugh at woe, and ev'ry day
Unpitying hear the cries of half a world
Vex'd with the galling scourge of slavery.
My eye is cast on Britain's western isles,
And I behold a patient slave grown faint
Under the lash. Inhuman dog, forbear,
The man who now lies bleeding at thy feet
Was once a monarch. To the bloody field
He led a num'rous tribe, attach'd by deeds
Of pure affection to their leader. He
No laws of mutiny had fram'd, nor fear'd
To see desertion thin his crowded ranks.
Bravely he fought, and hardly would submit,
Surviving only he. Then first he knew
What 'twas to faint, when looking for his friends
He saw them dead and bleeding at his side.
Nor had he then let fall his well-strung bow,
And shook the poison'd quiver from his side,

Were there one arrow left, or still surviv'd
He for whose life and happiness he fought,
His only son. Him reeking in his blood
The hapless monarch saw, and could no more
Then spare him yet. What tho' he left his task,
And sought the friendly shade to vent his grief
Yet recent. True, he slept, and at an hour
When all the world was busy. 'Twas the call
Of sympathizing nature, that would pour
One balm at least upon his countless wounds.
Poor soul, he slept, and fancy to his mind
Brought back again the days he once had seen,
Forth from his hut he went, his only son
And wife (now more than widow) by his side.
He tip't his arrow, strung his bow, and shot.
The stricken bird is her's, and her's the deer.
These are his choicest gifts. With these he seeks
His humble palace once again; there sits
And eats his plain and temperate repast,

And the too-fleeting hours beguiles with talk
Of twenty thousand dangerous escapes
From cruel tiger, or more cruel man,
And was this little happiness too much?
The sword of justice surely will unsheath,
Nor fall in vain upon these guilty isles,
Cross not again the proud Atlantic wave,
With hellish purpose to enslave the free,
Or load the pris'ner with eternal chains,
For he is Man as thou art. Not for thee,
And only thee, did God's creative Word
Call into being this vast work, the world,
Nor yet for thee that Word incarnate shed
His precious blood. Go, false and cruel tyrant,
Reign in the forests of thy native isle,
And let the prowling savage reign in his.
Let him enjoy the little bliss he owns,
Or give him more. Make not that little less,
For Adam was his sire, and Adam thine ;

And

And he shall share redemption too with thee,
With thee, and me, and all this Gentile world,
If we deserve to rank in brotherhood
With one we wrong so much. Content were he
To tread the burning desert, feel the sun
Shoot his fierce rays direct upon his head,
And earn the little plenty his wild state
Affords, with hunter's toil. Content were he
To be an humble pensioner at best
Of the grim lion; but the cursed hand
Of brutal avarice that peace destroys,
That little peace the lordly lion spares.

September half run out, the day returns,
Remember'd oft with awful reverence
And pious love of thee, All-seeing Power,
Who follow't virtue wheresoe'er she roves,
Her shield and buckler. On the sunny down
Eliza stray'd. Ah! why alone? 'Twas so

The

The tempter vanquish'd Eve; 'twas so she fell.
She stray'd and mus'd, she pluck'd a flow'r and fung!
She knew no fear, accustom'd oft to range
The pleasant hill, and deeming none less good,
Less honest than herself. But such the world
We cannot find the place, howe'er remote
From public notice, that escapes the search
Of prying lust, and keeps secure and safe
The jewel virtue. An Hibernian whelp,
Strong as the tiger, subtle as the fox,
Saw and was pleas'd. No bar to him his vow
Made at the altar, to be constant still
To her he wedded there. In his false heart
He fed adult'rous hope, he couch'd and slunk,
And with a leer the solitary down
Survey'd, far as the jealous eye can reach.
* So Satan lurk'd, and joy'd to find alone
Ingenious Eve; and he his proem tun'd

* Milton.

With

With flattery and lies, and so didst thou.
Into the heart of Eve his words made way;
Eliza heard not thine. For she had mark'd
And knew her tempter; she had well observ'd,
Unknown to thee, thy often-practis'd wiles.
What wonder then thy eulogy was vain?
Thy large account of honour and of wealth
Mov'd only her derision, nor could win
One smile, one kiss, one look of approbation.
Here had thy passion ceas'd, thou might'st at least
Have challeng'd honour with the fiend of Hell.
But foil'd and still repuls'd, thy baser soul
Had meaner shifts to try. Her reason proof,
Thy next resource unmanly violence.
What guilty marks left not thy greedy hand
Upon the fair one's arm? so mighty thou
To combat virtue, to assail a maid
No match for thee but in so good a cause.
Yet hadst thou vanquish'd, but a pow'r unseen
Approv'd

Approv'd her efforts, and resist'd thine.
What saw'st thou, coward, to be put to flight
Swift as the hostile arrow? Mark my words.
The man of noble purpose nothing daunts,
No, not a falling world. He were compos'd
And stedfast as a rock, tho' floods of fire
The world and all its fellows swept away,
And he beheld a UNIVERSE IN FLAMES,
Then was the mighty foil'd, the cunning caught.
And yet he blushes not. Accus'd, he starts,
Protests his innocence, appeals to justice,
Unlocks the copious fountain of his eye,
And who can say it is not strange and piteous?
Yet why decays his honour spite of tears,
Of protestations and appeals, of threats,
And public insolence? Ah me! I fear
Eliza may forgive thee, but in vain;
And tho' insulted Justice slumber here,
She will arraign thee at the bar of Heaven,
And spite of Charity the wrong repay.

The

The happy morning comes, expected long
By lads and lasses. Soon as light appears,
The swain is ready in his Sunday frock,
And calls on Nell to trip it to the fair.
The village bells are up, and jangling loud
Proclaim the holiday. The clam'rous drum
Calls to the puppet-show. The groaning horn
And twanging trumpet speak the sale begun,
Of articles most rare and cheap. Dogs bark
Astonished at the noise. Old women laugh,
Boys shout, and the grave Doctor mounts with glee
His crowded scaffold, struts, and makes a speech,
Maintains the virtue of his salve for corns,
His worm-cake and his pills, puffs his known skill,
And shews his kettle, silver knives and forks,
Ladle and cream-pot, and to crown the whole,
The splendid tankard. Andrew grins, and courts
The gaping multitude, till Tom and Sue
And Abigail and Ned their shoulders shrug.

And

And laugh and whisper, and resolve to sport
The solitary shilling. See produc'd
Their unwash'd handkerchiefs. Ah! simple swains,
Ah! silly maids, you laugh, but Andrew wins.
And what for you but sorrow and remorse,
Or box of salve to plaister disappointment?
Unless the smart of folly may be sooth'd
By Andrew's merry pranks, the dancing girl,
And frolic tumbler. Now the street is fill'd
With stalls and booths for gingerbread and beer,
Rear'd by enchantment, finish'd in a trice.
Amusements here for children of all sorts;
For little master's pence, a coach, a drum,
A horse, a wife, a trumpet; dolls for miss,
Fans, cups and saucers, kettles, maids and churns.
For idle school-boys Punchinello rants,
The juggler shuffles, and the artful dame
Extends her lucky bag. For infants tall,
Of twenty years and upwards, rueful games,

To whirl the horse-shoe, bowl at the nine-pins,
Game at the dial-plate, drink beer and gin,
Rant, rave, and swear, cudgel, get drunk and fight,
Then comes the ass-race. Let not wisdom frown
If the grave clerk look on, and now and then
Bestow a smile; for we may see, Alcanor,
In this untoward race the ways of life.
Are we not asses all? we start and run,
And eagerly we press to pass the goal,
And all to win a bauble, a lac'd hat.
Was not great Wolsey such? He ran the race
And won the hat. What ranting politician,
What prating lawyer, what ambitious clerk,
But is an ass that gallops for a hat?
For what do Princes strive, but gilded hats?
For diadems, whose bare and scanty brims
Will hardly keep the sun-beam from their eyes.
For what do Poets strive? a leafy hat,
Without or crown or brim, which hardly screens
The empty noddle from the fift of scorn,

Much

Much less repels the critic's thund'ring arm,
And here and there intoxication too
Concludes the race. Who wins the hat, gets drunk,
Who wins a laurel, mitre, cap, or crown,
Is drunk as he. So Alexander fell,
So Haman, Cæsar, Spenser, Wolsey, James.

Now chilly ev'ning puts her grey coat on,
And from the east advancing, puts to flight
The rear of day, girt with a zone of stars.
The busy fair is ended. The rank booth
Spews out its beastly habitant, the mob
Disperse, and Andrew's merry pranks are done.
Home reels the drunken clown, or stays to fight,
Nothing the cause, yet honour much concern'd.
Confusion reigns, uproar and loud mis-rule;
Distinctions cease, and still the oath, the scream,
The shout, the hoot, disturb the midnight ear
Of sober Cloe gone to bed betimes.

Such

Such was the time, ah me! when Dorothy,
 The hubbub hardly ended, from her swain
 The vow extorted to be ever her's.
 Three times Alcanor's voice the banns proclaim'd,
 And three times all were still. Then to the church
 The grinning bride was led, and fast was tied,
 Ah! much too fast, the hymeneal knot.
 Then grief was mine, grief inconfolable,
 And sleepless nights and inharmonious days.
 For how could I rejoice, my charmer gone,
 My Lesbia fled, my lovely Lalage,
 My Sugarella, my dear Dorothy?

AH me! the golden year is done. Behold,
 Gloomy and sad November comes, with brow
 Severe and clouded. Scarce a leaf sustains
 His pestilential blast. The woods are stript,
 And all their honours shatter'd in the vale.
 The messenger of furlly Winter he,
 And in his hand he bears the nipping frost.
 Before his tyrant lord he scatters fleet,
 And with a hideous frown bids Autumn speed,
 And after her runs howling thro' the land.

The field has lost its verdure. All the pride
 Of the sweet garden fades. Where now the rose,
 The pink, the stock, the lupin, or the pea,
 Or gay chrysanthemum? Where now the comb,

The aster, larkspur, balsam, or carnation?
Or where the lilly with her snowy bells?
Where the gay jessmin, odorous syringa,
Graceful laburnum, or bloom-clad arbuta?
Or if we stray, where now the Summer's walk
So still and peaceable, at early eve
Along the shady lane, or thro' the wood,
To pluck the ruddy strawberry, or smell
The perfum'd breeze that all the fragrance stole
Of honey-suckle, blossom'd beans, or clover?
Where now the blush of Spring, and the long day
Beloiter'd? cheerful May that fill'd the woods
With music, scatter'd the green vale with flows,
And hung a smile of universal joy
Upon the cheek of nature? Where blooms now
The king-cup and the daisy? Where inclines
The harebell or the cowslip? Where looks gay
The vernal furze with golden baskets hung?
Where captivates the sky-blue periwinkle
Under the cottage eaves? Where waves the wood,

Or rings with harmony the merry vale ?
Day's harbinger no song attunes ; no song
Or solo anthem deigns sweet Philomel.
The golden wood-pecker laughs loud no more.
The pye no longer prates ; no longer scolds
The faucy jay. Who sees the goldfinch now
The feather'd groundsil pluck, or hears him sing
In bow'r of apple blossoms perch'd ? Who sees
The chimney-haunting swallow skim the pool,
And quaintly dip, or hears his early song
Twitter'd to young-eyed day. All, all are hush'd,
The very bee her merry toil foregoes,
Nor seeks her nectar, to be sought in vain.
Only the solitary robin sings,
And perch'd aloft with melancholy note
Chants out the dirge of Autumn ; cheerless bird,
That loves the brown and desolated scene,
And scanty fare of Winter. Let me weep
With you, ye Muses, and with you, ye fair,
Chief mourner at the grave of her we love,

Expiring

Expiring nature. For ye fought with me
 The sober twilight of the shelving wood,
 With me forsook the glare of fultry day,
 To tread the serious gloom Religion loves,
 And where she smiles and wipes her dewy eye,
 With meditation walking hand in hand.
 Ye too have lov'd and heartily approv'd
 The winding foot-path, and the sudden turn,
 The green-sward waggon-way and gothic aisle;
 And heard me comment on the leaf, the branch,
 The arm, the girth of the paternal oak.
 Ye too, have lov'd the long accustom'd gap,
 That all so unexpectedly presents
 The clear cerulean prospect down the vale.
 Oft have ye stood upon the shaggy brow
 Of yonder wood-clad hill, to gaze with me
 Athwart the wide and far extended view,
 That ocean skirts or blue downs indistinct.
 Oft have ye look'd with transport pure as mine
 Into the flow'ry dell. But ah! no more

We wander heedless; Winter's wind forbids.
 The piercing cold commands us shut the door,
 And rouse the cheerful hearth; for at the heels
 Of dark November, comes with arrowy scourge
 The tyrannous December. Joyless now
 The morning sun scarce seen, and clouded eve,
 No genial influence sheds noon, eclips'd.
 Sad scenes ensue; brief days, and blust'ring nights,
 And snows, such as the winter loving Muse
 Of Cowper paints well pleas'd, and such as mine
 Views not unsatisfied. For tho' without
 Bleak winds and pinching frosts, within is joy,
 And harmony, and peace.

Say, Muse, how pass
 The frozen hours of Winter, the long eve,
 The gloomy morn, the cold and cheerless day,
 At the lone mansion that invests the fair
 And Village Curate. Genius there unfolds
 Her quick impassion'd page, and Nature there

And art their secret treasures all display,
 There dance the jocund maids of Memory
 In everlasting round. Heroic song
 Her swelling act proclaims, and eloquence
 Flows with her smooth and even tide along.
 Transported History the fame recounts,
 Of ages past and gone, and nothing vex'd
 Or wearied with her long exact account,
 O'erleaps the boundaries of present time,
 And led by prophecy, extends her tale,
 Fondly perhaps, to the world's consummation.
 Then music cheers, and sympathetic sounds
 Makes smooth the way for serious Tragedy,
 Then dialogue and high dispute, the song,
 The dance, the hearty laugh, and flippant wit
 Of merry Comedy. Urania then
 Points to the starry firmament, or Moon
 Eclips'd, and holds attention mute, the while
 With moving finger she describes the course
 Of planetary stars, or with sweet voice

Tells whither she led up her heav'nly band
To visit light and draw empyreal air;
Or whither Newton, more than mortal then,
When musing as he sat, she shook the tree,
And dropt an apple, and her studious child
Caught up to heav'n. 'Tis pleasant to remark
How early genius plumes her for the flight
And tries her short excursions, fearful yet
And little on her wing confiding, now
Full-fledg'd and dauntless, cutting thro' the clouds
And peering in the eye of heav'n itself.
Sagacious Newton, let me muse with thee,
And wonder at thy quick and piercing eye
Cleans'd of its mortal film. Who does not wish
Like thee to penetrate the dark abode
Of clouded mystery, and in his word
And works unfold the awful Deity.

But not at Newton only to admire,
Ye studious fair, we love, but sometimes laugh

At

At Brahe and Descartes; praise the strong eye
Of Galileo, and applaud the speed
Of busy Wilkins, posting like a witch
Upon a restive broom-stick to the Moon,

And sometimes thee, ingenious Boyle, we hear,
Maintaining truth and lifting nature; thee
Sometimes, whose patriotic genius foil'd
Assailant Rome, and almost sav'd the state
Of falling Syracuse: then travel round
The universal globe, at ev'ry shore
Taking large draughts of story and of song,
But chiefly thee we love, majestic Britain,
Wedded to Neptune, and thy thund'ring fleets
Follow exulting to the hostile shore;
Now bear thee company to farthest Ind,
Or to the frozen pole, or round the cape
Of utmost Horn, with philosophic touch
Converting dross to gold: now disembark,
And march with Harry to the heart of France,

And

And beard the wordy Monarch on his throne.
 And now we follow to the cannon's mouth,
 Tremendous Marlborough, or stand by,
 The living Elliot scare his foe to death,
 With everlasting show'r of burning hail,
 And many more we praise, and some accuse,
 Whose names and deeds my speedy muse sings out.

And now morality we love, and truth,
 And serious argument, and grave debate,
 What Mede or Newton with prophetic eye
 Divine, what Hales or Tillotson advise.
 Anon we smile with zealous Latimer,
 Or silent Addison, then range at large
 Cervantes, Sidney, Bacon, Fenelon,
 And twenty thousand more choice wits and rare.

But chiefly thee, immortal Shakespear, thee
 We love and honour, Nature's darling child,
 And still we court thy Muse and still applaud,

Whether

Whether the gentle Portia tread the stage
With bloody Shylock, or Vincentio wed
The virtuous Isabel. Whether thy fays
Dance to the Moon, or Prospero dispatch
His sight-outrunning Ariel to the deep,
The while the generous Miranda cheers
Her fainting Ferdinand, Whether the Duke
And gloomy Jaques confer, and Rosalind
Laughs at her sighing lover in disguise;
Or smiling Perdita comes tripping by
With mint and marj'ram, rosemary and rue,
Or Viola that never told her love,
But let concealment like a worm i' th' bud
Feed on her damask cheek. With hearty laughter
We still dismiss the still outwitted rogue,
But still pretending Falstaff. Then we trace
With terror and applause, the bloody deeds
Of civil rage, and full of horror see
Thy mailed Mars upon his altar sit
Up to the ears in blood; the fatal cause

Aspring

Aspiring Bolingbroke. Thence wrath ensued,
And frequent bickering and stedfast hate,
The lie refounded and the gauntlet fell,
And ev'ry tongue cried traitor. To the field
They rush'd, and all their blades athirst drank blood.
So Percy fell, and old Northumberland,
Three Dukes of Somerset three-fold renown'd,
Two Cliffords, virtuous Humphry, Suffolk, York,
So Montague and Warwick, two brave bears,
That in their chains fetter'd the kingly lion,
And made the forest tremble when they roar'd.
Then comes despotic Richard, in thy lines,
Great bard, supremely horrible, his eye
Still bent on slaughter, tho' his reeking blade
Has lost its edge by use, and his faint arm
Claims respite. Wolfey then the fall laments
Of earthly grandeur, and the favour lost
Of princely Harry, and we too lament.
Then pitied and applauded, Timon raves;
And noble Coriolanus scorns the shout

Of popular applause, thence basely doom'd
To banishment and death. Then Brutus strikes,
And bleeding Julius, looking for his friend,
Dies by his hand. In hurly-burly then,
With ghosts and witches circled round, Macbeth
In fiery storm stalks by, with tim'rous eye
And fretful conscience, shunning the decree
Of blood for blood. Then Imogen delights,
And eagerly we trace th' eventful scene,
Till all winds up into a happy close.
Not such the fortune of afflicted Lear
And poor Cordelia, of thy injur'd wife
Jealous Othello, of the maid distraught
Ophelia, or thy bride that slept with death,
Too hasty Romeo. Yet these delight,
And in their dread catastrophe dispense
Wholesome correction to the bleeding heart.

The Poet silent, long with rapture heard,
The Shakespear of another art succeeds.

Sweet music wakes, and with transporting air
 Handel begins. What mortal is not rapt
 To hear his tender wildly-warbled song
 Where'er he strays; but chiefly when he sings
 Messiah come, and with amazing shout
 Proclaims him King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,
 For ever and for ever, Hallelujah.
 Great soul, O say from what immortal fount
 Thou hast deriv'd such never-failing power
 To win the soul, and bear it on the wings
 Of purest extacy, beyond the reach
 Of ev'ry human care. From whence thine art
 To lift us from the earth, and fix us there
 Where pure devotion with unsparing hand
 Pours on the altar of the living God
 The hallow'd incense of the grateful heart.
 O mighty Handel, what seraphic power
 Gave inspiration to thy sacred song?
 Thyself perchance was some supernal spirit,
 Permitted to reside on earth awhile,

To teach us here what Music is in Heaven,
If ev'ry Angel that attends the throne
Of clouded Deity, such song inspire,
Let but our mortal ears one chorus hear,
And all the world were gather'd into Heaven.
The very Devils surely were drawn up
To listen at the golden doors of light,
And Hell left wasteful, wide, and desolate.

Corelli, sweet harmonious bird, thee too
We hear delighted, and thy mellow strains
Deem no mean recompense for the lost song
Of lark and nightingale. Thy air repeat,
And let judicious discord still commend
Triumphant harmony, till Winter's self
Be won like us, and smoooth his rugged brow,
And all his hours enchanted fleet away,
Soft as his fur, and quiet as his snow.

And oft we feel the soul-subduing power
Of vocal harmony, breath'd softly forth

Wit

With equable accord, without or art,
 Or quaint embellishment, save only such
 As Nature dictates, and without design
 Lets fall with ease in her impassion'd mood,
 Then serious glee and elegy delight,
 Or pious anthem such as Croft inspires,
 Or graver Purcell, or endearing Clark.
 The noble harmony of Brewer, Este,
 Webbe, Baildon, Ravenscroft, we hear
 With ever-new delight. Brisk canzonet
 Then pleases, gay duet, or Highland air
 Divinely warbled, and with cadence sweet
 And tender pause drawn out by one we love,
 Spontaneous and unask'd. And oft the soul
 With patriotic ardor glows, and pants
 For glory, honor, and immortal deeds,
 Transported at the sound of martial strains
 With sudden burst commenc'd, and moving slow
 With solemn grandeur and majestic pomp
 To an obstreperous rebounding close.

But

But who shall tell in simple song like mine,
The many shapes that music, Proteus-like,
Puts on, with grateful change of subject, time,
Contrivance, mood, soothing the captive ear,
And filling the rapt soul with fare so sweet
That still she feeds and hungers. Human tongue
Shall hardly tell what infinite delight
Sweet Music yields, for ever fashioning
Her sober pleasures to the various mind.
What wonder then the sulky wheels of time
Fly glibly round, the drowsy pendulum
Foregoes his old vexatious click unheeded,
And the shrill-sounding bell rings out apace
The brief accomplish'd hours. By Music won,
Decrepit Time forgets his annual gout,
Renews his dance, and with a noiseless foot
Hies speedily away.

I have not told,
How oft we listen to the musty song

K

Of

Of ancient bards, nor think we need excuse
To honour merit in her home-spun suit.
And chiefly we esteem thy fairy song,
Immortal Spenser, in rude guise yclad.
Then the fierce knight comes pricking o'er the plain,
Drad for his derring do and bloody deed.
And now the combat 'gins, and cruel arms
The recreant knight o'erwhelm in uncouth fray.
The castle falls, and many a maid is won,
And many a maid is lost thro' dire mishap.

Then comes a troop in gilded uniform,
The goodly band Johnsonian. Cowley first,
Poetic child, whose philosophic muse
Distracts, delights, torments, and captivates.
Let me attend, when from the world retir'd,
He turn'd his restive Pegasus to graze,
And thought, and wrote, sedate and sober prose.
Comes Milton next, that like his wakeful bird
Sings darkling, sings and mourns his eye-sight lost.

And

And nightly wanders to the muses' haunt,
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; to us
Displaying nature, and the blissful scenes
Of Paradise, tho' not to him returns
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine.
Sweet bard, that bears us softly now, and smooth
As that unwrinkled flood that slowly winds
By Windsor's haughty tow'rs, and visits shores
Divinely various—rushes now, and leaps,
Aftounding sense, immeasurable depth,
A foaming cataract, whose thund'ring fall
Confounds all hell, and utmost earth and heaven.
Comes Butler then, incomparable wit,
And not to be reprov'd, save when his muse
Decorum overleaps, and here and there
Bolts the coarse jest, to the chaste eye and ear
Offensive: for behind the comic mask

We find the scholar and the man of sense,
The friend of virtue, and the foe of vice.
Then follows courtly Waller, and in vain
On Amoret or Saccharissa calls,
With budget full of trifles, birth-day odes,
Congratulations, songs, and compliments,
And mythologic tales. Then Denham charms,
And from his own Parnassus, Cooper's hill,
Sings the wide prospect that extended lies
Under his proud survey. Then Sprat. And then
Roscommon fills with elegant remark,
His verse as elegant; unspotted lines
Flow from a mind unspotted as themselves.
Then Wilmot tunes his reed, and in his song
Gives early promise of a genius, rare
And turn'd for excellence. But ah! how vain
All human hopes! The prime of life is spent,
His talent wasted, and the giddy fool
Grows old in pleasure, and denies his God.
The grave in view, an honest friend his guide,

He

He views his conduct with remorse, repents,
Acknowledges his fault, curses the wit
Of feeble man that so outwits itself,
And dies a martyr to the pains of vice.
Then Yalden sings, and fills us with delight,
His harp so tun'd that as the morning breaks
It moves spontaneous rapture, and again
At ev'ning close with solemn eulogy
Welcomes the reign of night. With weeping eye
But harlot cheek, then Otway's muse appears
And charms the hearer with her Syren song,
To decency, alas, no friend, to vice
No enemy. His Celia then proclaims
Enamour'd Duke, at Floriana's grave
Strewing sweet flow'rs and sweeter verse. Then sings
The gen'rous Dorset, sings and sings too much,
Scarce heard an hour. Chaste Montague succeeds,
Stepney less pure, and Walsh, with feeble wing,
Half flying, half on foot. Then comes a bard,
Worn out and penniless, and poet still
Tho' bent with years, and in impetuous rhyme

Pours out his unexhausted song. What muse
So flexible, so generous as thine,
Immortal Dryden. From her copious fount
Large draughts he took, and unbeseeming song
Inebriated sang. Who does not grieve,
To hear the foul and insolent rebuke
Of angry satire from a bard so rare?
To trace the lubricous and oily course
Of abject adulation, the lewd line
Of shameless vice, from page to page? and find
The judgment brib'd, the heart unprincipled,
And only loyal at th' expence of truth,
Of justice, and of virtue? Meaner strain
The dapper wit commends of sprightly Garth.
We smile to see fantastic poetry
Shake hands with physic, and with grave burlesque
Arrange his gallipots, and gild his pills;
Then march in dreadful armor to the field,
To screen her new ally from hostile shocks,
With pestle truncheon, Cloacinian helm,

And

And levell'd squirt. Then heartily we laugh,
With laughter-loving King, and much applaud
That vein of mirth which, innocent and clear,
In silver decence flows. Young Phillips then,
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,
A shilling, breeches, and chimæras dire,
Sings gravely jocund. Disfmal Rag applauds,
With sympathetic ardor touch'd, at sound
Of tatter'd galligaskins, college duns,
And subtle catchpole. Modest Pomfret then,
To soar aloft unable, with light wing
Above the plain scarce elevated skims,
A short and feeble flight. So have I seen
The spaniel-hunted quail with lowly wing
Shear the smooth air : and so too have I heard
That she can sweetly clamour, tho' compell'd
To tread the humble vale, nor ever mount
High as the ev'ning swift or morning lark.
Then blameless Hughes, in league with Pepuch, sings,
And to the eloquent orchestra tunes
His virtuous, unmeaning song. And now

In tones that might attract an angel's ear,
Flows the smooth strain of righteous Addison.
Then Blackmore sings an everlasting tale,
Blest with a callous muse. Genius in vain
Laughs at the proud attempt, for still he bawls,
And with gigantic dissonance subdues
The universal hiss. No poet sure,
But mark the man, and you shall find him good.
And what's the poet if the man be naught?
Let Buckingham reply. Genius and wit
May flourish for a day, and snatch the wreath
From awkward honesty. But soon shall fade
The easy laurels of a vicious muse,
While amaranthine honours crown the brow
Of unpoetic virtue. Waller's muse
In courteous Granville lives, and still we hear
Of Jove and Juno, Mercury and Mars,
And all the nauseous mythologic rout.
May he that loves hereafter, never win
The angel he adores, if in his song
Be aught of pagan ornament display'd.

May

May he be curs'd like you, unlucky bards,
Be Saccharissa's dupe, and Myra's scorn.
Who can refuse applause to tragic Rowe?
Who can withhold his honest praise from thee,
Tickel, thou friend of Addison, and virtue?
Who is not startled at the fertile wit
Of beardless Congreve? and who does not grieve
It was not drawn in the defence of virtue?
How sweet the music of thy happy lines,
Poetic Prior; full of mirth thy muse,
And exquisite her jest. Ah! hear it not,
Ye sober fair, for fulsome is the tale,
And only fit for the distemper'd ear
Of jolly libertines. His graver song
Applaud unsatisfied, and ever laugh
To see him mount the furious Pegasus
Pindaric, often tried, but tried in vain,
And never to be tam'd by crazy wits.
'Twas an unruly and a hard-mouth'd horse,
'And flung his rider if he sat not sure,'
Dan Cowley said. Yet up sprung Mat, resolv'd.

O'er

* O'er sea and land with an unbounded loofe,
 Runs the mad fteed, a Gilpin race I ween.
 Hardly the Mufe can fit the head-ftiong horfe.
 See, now ſhe gallops round the Belgic ſhore,
 Now thro' the raging ocean ploughs her way,
 To rough Ierne's camps; there ſounds alarms,
 In the dank marſhes finds her glorious theme,
 And plunges after him thro' Boyne's fierce flood.
 Back to his Albion then, then with ſtiff wing
 Eaſt, over Danube and Propontis' ſhores,
 From the Mœotis to the northern ſea,
 To viſit the young Muſcovite; thence up,
 Reſolv'd to reach the high empyrean ſphere,
 And aſk for William an Olympic crown.
 Till loſt in trackleſs fields of ſhining day,
 Unhors'd, and all aghaſt, down, down ſhe comes,
 Comes ruſhing with uncommon ruin down.
 Glorious attempt, but not unhappy fate.
 'Twas lucky, Mat, thou had'ſt not giv'n a name
 To ſome Icarian gulf, or ſhook at leaſt

* See his Carmen Seculare for the year 1700.

The carnal man so fore, that he had limp'd,
And lamely hobbled to the verge of life.
But, thank our stars, thy pace is even yet,
And happily the Muse her mirthful song
In durance vile prolongs. So have I heard
The captive finch, in narrow cage confin'd,
Charm all his woe away with cheerful song,
Which might have melted e'en a heart of steel
To give him liberty. Hence, hence, away
Ye meaner wits, hide your diminish'd heads,
See genius self approaches. Homer's soul
A puny child informs. Let envy laugh
To see an urchin ugly as herself
The glory of our isle. For thee, great bard,
We twine the laurel wreath, and grant it thine
Thrice-won. Shall any mortal tongue presume
To scatter censure on thy charming page?
Hark, 'tis the din of twenty thousand curs
Who bark at excellence, Who best deserves
Must feel the scourge of infinite abuse,
For man to man is fiercer than the wolf,

More

More cruel than the tiger. Who can brook
The sight of aught more worthy than himself?
Invite an angel from the courts of heaven,
Our critic eye shall spy a thousand faults
Where not a fault exists. Mistake me not,
I call not thee an angel, haughty bard,
Thy deeds were human. With an honest heart
I love the poet, but detest the man.
Thy purer lays what mortal can despise,
Thy baser song what mortal can approve,
Thou witty, dirty, patriotic Dean?
Laugh on, laugh on. With pencil exquisite
Describe the features of adopted vice,
And overbearing folly. Give the fair,
The peerless Stella, everlasting worth,
Deride thy narrow paper-sparing friend,
And gall the great. But why shall thy sweet Muse
Turn scavenger, and the foul kennel rake
For themes and similes? What heart but grieves,
To find an equal portion in thy song
Of elegantly fair and grossly foul?

Now honest Gay, a city shepherd, sings,
Nor sings in vain to us. In Arcady
We love to stray, and dream of happy days
No eye has seen, no heart has felt. We love
The land of Fairy, and the puny deeds
Of dapper elves. Whate'er the frantic poet
In his wild mood imagines, we applaud.
Nor wholly scorn with Gay or Broome, to stray,
Or Ambrose Philips, thro' enchanted land
To painted meadows, flow'ry lawns and hills,
To crystal floods, cool groves, and shady bow'rs,
And rills that babble, tinkle, purl, and murmur.
How sweet the song that from thy mellow pipe,
Dear Parnel flow'd. Death heard, and was amaz'd,
And his stone couch forsook, all wonder now,
And now all envy. Sure he thought no bard
Of mortal mixture could such tones create.
Or if of mortal mixture, he had liv'd
More than the days of man, and stol'n from years
Due to the reign of silence and of death,
Song so divine. With the bad thought possess'd,

He

He whet his arrow on a flint, advanc'd,
 And flung it greedily, his lipless jaws
 Grinding with hate. So fell betimes the bard,
 So triumph'd death, and at the bloody deed
 Shook his lean bones with laughter. Cursed fiend,
 Thou bane of excellence, go hence, and laugh;
 Yet shall the pious poet sing again,
 And thou shalt hear, and with eternal wrath
 Ay burning, dance with agony, and gnaw,
 Howling for pain, the adamantine gates
 Of treble-bolted Hell.

Away, kind bards;
 Enough of you, nor shall your song beguile
 One moment more; for see again sweet Spring
 Laughs at our window, and with rosy hand
 Shews the full blossom and the budded leaf.
 Away, away. Some wint'ry day be thine,
 Descriptive Thomson; some December night,
 Thine, pious Young; some melancholy morn
 In wat'ry fog wrapt up, thine, orphan Savage.

Be thou our close companion, Shenstone, thou,
Sweet bard of Hagley, in the hawthorn shade
Some weary Summer's noon. Be thou our guest,
Impetuous Akenfide, some gloomy eve,
When the red lightning scarce begins to glare,
And the mute thunder hardly deigns to growl.
Rais'd by thy torrent song, we shall enjoy
The loud increasing horrors of the storm,
Awfully grand. At such a time thee too,
Rapt in ferocious extacy, we call,
Terrific Gray, to sweep thy fullen lyre,
And give to madness the distracted soul.
Repose at leisure, ye inferior bards,
Till Summer's beauty flies, and the green wood
Scatters her recent honours to the breeze.

So have I gayly sung the man how blest,
The Village Curate; weaving in my song
Your praise, ye fair, and many an honest thought
Which unsolicited demanded room.

I care

I care not if no eye this page peruse.
I sung with pleasure, and I end with joy.
I sing no more, and blame him not who sleeps,
Careless what I, enamour'd of the vale
And hilly woodland, have so vainly sung.
For popular applause, I ask it not.
Who'd be a feather in the billowy breeze?
True, noble critic, it were ill deserv'd,
By this rude song obtain'd. Yet I not fear,
Ere the short tale of my existence close,
Some strain, by chance, on my time-mellow'd harp
To hit, these woods may well remember. Yes,
Some happy strain, by chance, I hope to hit,
If yet the Muses love thy fam'd retreat,
O Sidney, or thy Spenser's early song;
If yet the walks where love-sick Waller mus'd,
If yet immortal Saccharissa's haunt
Delight them, and sweet Amoret's abode.

F I N I S.



